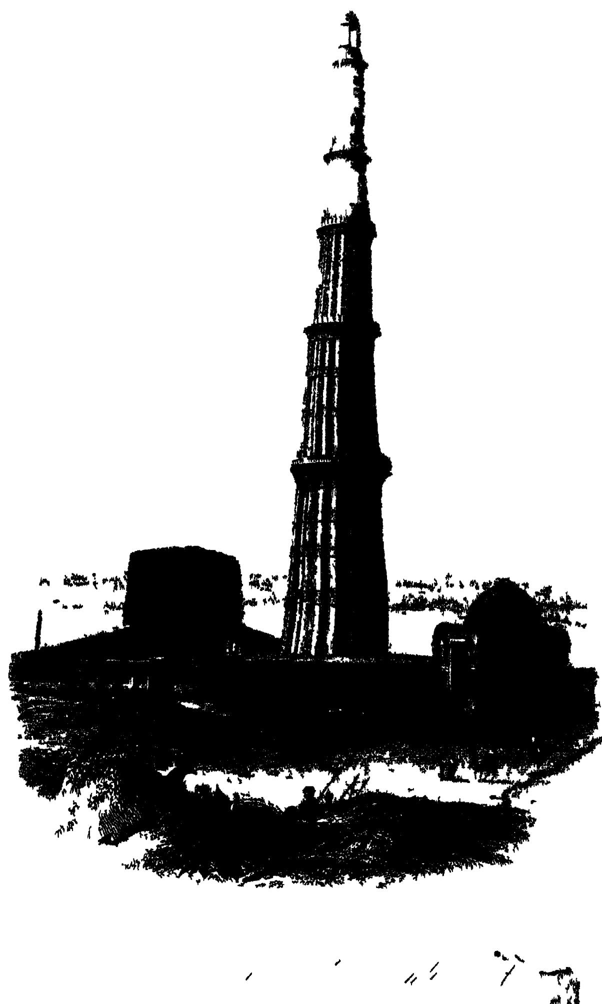




THE

ORIENTAL ANNUAL,

OR

Scenes in India;

COMPRISING

TWENTY-FIVE ENGRAVINGS

FROM ORIGINAL DRAWINGS

BY WILLIAM DANIELL, R.A.

A DESCRIPTIVE ACCOUNT

BY THE REV. HOBART CAUNTER, B.D.

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ENGRAVINGS

FROM

Drawings

BY

WILLIAM DANIELL, ESQ. R.A.

THIS VOLUME IS,

BY GRACIOUS PERMISSION,

DEDICATED TO THEIR ROYAL HIGHNESSES

THE DUCHESS OF KENT AND PRINCESS VICTORIA.

ADDRESS.

The Oriental Annual has been undertaken with a view of illustrating that portion of the civilized world, which is especially rich in magnificent objects and even in natural and artificial wonders.

To impart the charm of novelty has been the chief aim of those whose labours have been combined in the present volume.

The author need not insist on Mr. Daniell's competency to perform that part of the task which has devolved upon him; as a residence of ten years in India, during the whole of which period he was professionally engaged, has given him advantages over every living artist in the delineation of Eastern scenery.

In reference to the author's own competency, he can only advert to the advantages which he has derived from having lived several years in the country, where the scenes represented in the Oriental Annual are laid.

It has been his aim to blend entertainment with information,—to record such events as he considered best calculated to amuse, at the same time that they should afford an insight into the habits, manners, and national prejudices of a remote and extraordinary people.

I. H. C.

September 20th, 1833.



SCENES IN INDIA.

CHAPTER I.

MADRAS.—THE MONSOON.

INDIA was the country which I fixed upon as the scene of my projected wanderings as soon as I became of age. I consequently took my passage in the Atlas Indiaman, and, after an agreeable voyage of little more than four months, on the 26th day of September we came in sight of the Asiatic shore. Early in the morning, Cape Comorin appeared like a dense cloud upon the distant horizon; we passed it about noon, running gallantly up the Coromandel coast, where all those picturesque varieties in the landscape were presented to our view for which that coast is distinguished. Those bright tints, so common in this glowing clime, which were thrown over every object on the land, were continually varying with the rise and declension of the sun, exhibiting to the European eye a something at once so indefinitely impressive and strikingly new, that I felt for the moment rather a weight upon my spirits, and thought of Old England with keener regret than I had done since I quitted

her shores. We coasted within four leagues of the land, under easy sail, with light breezes, passing the island of Ceylon, with its thickly-wooded hills and broken line of beach, covered with tall palms and tufted cocoa-nut trees, until the whole mass dwindled into a pale speck in the distance, and was finally lost in the shadows of evening. After a most delightful sail of four days, we anchored in the roadstead of Madras, and a most imposing scene it presents to the contemplation of a stranger! The splendid edifices, and at a distance they have an appearance of extreme splendour, with their lofty verandas and terraced roofs; the tall white columns, which are seen in striking relief against a clear blue sky, and these surrounded by the broad massy fort; the lashing surf, foaming and hissing over a long unbroken line of beach, which the eye follows until its powers of perception are baffled by the distance; the variety of barks dotting the smooth surface of the waters, beyond the influence of the surge; the groups of dark and busy figures gathered at intervals upon the strand:—all these are objects not to be beheld with indifference by a stranger, pointing, as many of them do, to a new page in the vast and varied volume of nature. The extent to which the city, when first observed from the offing, seems to stretch beyond the walls, gives it an appearance of vastness at once singularly unexpected and imposing. The low sandy beach, over which the violently agitated waters are continually chafing and roaring with a din and turbulence that must be heard and seen to be conceived, apparently offering an insurmountable impediment to

your passage beyond the perilous barrier which they oppose to your landing; the varieties of the shipping and smaller craft, from the smartly-built fishing-smack to the unsightly catamaran; the uncouth-looking Massoolah boat, labouring along by the side of the buoyant yacht and lighter wherry—severally afford an agreeable relief to the dull uniformity of a four months' voyage.

Shortly after the Atlas had cast anchor, with some half-dozen of my fellow-passengers, I got into a Massoolah boat, which immediately made for the shore. These boats are most singularly constructed; they have the appearance of a rude barge, are flat-bottomed and without timbers, the planks being sewed together with line made from the outer coat of the cocoa-nut, and caulked with the same material. They are rowed with broad elliptical paddles, and are so extremely lithe, that the planks yield readily to the percussion of the waters, and thus, by diminishing the resistance, so break the force of the concussion, that they sustain little injury from the lashing of the surf, which is so terrific in its might and violence that a European boat has scarcely ever been known to pass through it without being dashed in pieces. It is really astonishing to see with what dexterity the boatmen manage these awkward-looking machines, steering them through the most boisterous sea, skilfully avoiding the stroke of the billows, and bringing them safely on shore through a surf that would appal the stoutest heart which had never before witnessed nature under any similar aspect of her power and of her sublimity. The Massoolah boats are almost invariably attended by catamarans; so that should any

of the former chance to upset, which is sometimes the case when, from mismanagement, they are suddenly thrown forward upon the crest of the breaker, these latter pick up the luckless passengers, and bear them safely to the shore. It very fortunately happens that sharks are seldom found within the influence of the surf, but keep mostly beyond it, in the smoother part of the roadstead; so that an accident from the upsetting of a Massoolah boat is seldom or never heard of, as the activity of the catamaran men is so great, that they almost instantly rescue the struggler, and land him safely on the beach, no less to his own astonishment and delight than to their praise and profit.

The catamaran is merely three large logs tied together in the form of a raft, the middle log being longer than the other two, and projecting a little above them: upon this the man who guides it is seated, and seems to be perched like a gull on the water, as the heavy raft upon which he sits is seldom seen above the surface. This simple contrivance is generally about ten feet long by eighteen inches broad.

Upon our landing we were assailed by the usual clamour of numberless voices speaking in an unknown tongue, which, blending with the terrific roaring of the surf, seemed to realize the fabled din of the forges of the Cyclops. We, however, soon got into the shelter of the town, where we were still pursued by the boisterous importunities of native servants and tradesmen, who are always clamorously urgent, the one to be hired, the other to be employed. These are generally rogues in proportion to their importunity; nevertheless, they are among those necessary evils

which we are glad to put up with for the sake of those positive conveniences by which they are balanced—evils to which in India all new-comers are especially exposed. The day after our arrival, a fellow-passenger (a civilian in the Company's service) and myself took a very convenient house within the fort, where we determined to remain until the setting-in of the monsoon; and after we had made these preliminary arrangements we set out to explore the town. By Indian engineers the fort is said to be impregnable; when I say Indian engineers, I mean those officers in that department of the military service who have acquired a knowledge of their profession in India. Few Europeans reside within the fort, in consequence of the additional heat reflected from high walls, and the want of a free circulation, arising from crowded buildings; but they have houses in the country within a short ride of the town, to which they come every morning to transact their business, and return to their country residences about six o'clock. The Armenian bridge, thrown over the river Meilapoor, on the road from Madras to St. Thomas's Mount, is a very interesting object: the extreme length, including the causeway, is four hundred and ten yards; it has twenty-nine arches, of irregular dimensions, owing to the recent repairs which it has undergone in consequence of inundations. The government-house is a superb building, fronted by a splendid colonnade, which leads down to the sea-gate, where merchandize of various kinds is continually carried from and to the ships in the roads. The Black Town, which is the quarter principally inhabited by the native

merchants, lies about half a mile north of Fort St. George, and is separated from it by the esplanade. In this quarter there is an Armenian church; there is also a handsome mosque, built by Mahommed Ali, Nabob of the Carnatic.*

On the 15th of October the flag-staff was struck as a signal for all vessels to leave the roads, lest they should be overtaken by the monsoon. On that very morning some premonitory symptoms of the approaching "war of elements" had appeared; small fleecy clouds were perceived at intervals to rise from the horizon, and to dissipate in a thin and almost imperceptible vapour over the deep blue of the still bright sky. There was a slight haze upon the distant waters, which seemed gradually to thicken, although not to a density sufficient to refract the rays of the sun, which still flooded the broad sea with one unvarying mass of glowing light. There was a sensation of suffocating heat in the atmosphere, which at the same moment seemed to oppress the lungs and depress the spirits. Towards the afternoon, the aspect of the sky began to change; the horizon gathered blackness, and the sun, which had risen so brightly, had evidently culminated in glory, to go down in darkness, and to have his splendour veiled from human sight by a long, gloomy period of storm and turbulence. Masses of heavy clouds appeared to rise from the sea, black and portentous, accompanied by

* So correct a representation has been given of Madras in the panorama painted by Mr. Daniell and Mr. Paris, that no verbal description can approach the vivid and extraordinary truth with which it realizes the whole scene to the beholder's eye.



sudden gusts of wind, that shortly died away, being succeeded by an intense, death-like stillness, as if the air were in a state of utter stagnation, and its vital properties arrested. It seemed no longer to circulate, until again agitated by the brief but mighty gusts which swept fiercely along, like the giant heralds of the storm. Meanwhile the lower circle of the heavens looked a deep brassy red, from the partial reflection of the sunbeams upon the thick clouds, which had now everywhere overspread it. The sun had long passed the meridian, and his rays were slanting upon the gathering billows, when those black and threatening ministers of the tempest rose rapidly towards the zenith.

> The dim horizon lowering vapours shroud,
> And blot the sun yet struggling through a cloud,
> Through the wide atmosphere, condensed with haze,
> His glowing orb emits a sanguine blaze.

About four o'clock the whole sky was overspread, and the deep gloom of twilight was cast over the town and sea. The atmosphere was condensed almost to the thickness of a mist, which was increased by the thin spray scattered over the land from the sea, by the violence of the increasing gales. The rain now began to fall in sheeted masses, and the wind to howl more continuously, which, mingling with the roaring of the surf, produced a tumultuous union of sounds, perfectly deafening.

As the house which we occupied overlooked the beach, we could behold the setting in of the monsoon in all its grand and terrific sublimity. The wind, with a force which nothing could resist, bent the

tufted heads of the tall, slim cocoa-nut trees almost to the earth, flinging the light sand into the air in eddying vortices, until the rain had either so increased its gravity, or beaten it into a mass, as to prevent the wind from raising it. The pale lightning streamed from the clouds in broad sheets of flame, which appeared to encircle the heavens as if every element had been converted into fire, and the world was on the eve of a general conflagration, whilst the peal, which instantly followed, was like the explosion of a gunpowder-magazine, or the discharge of artillery in the gorge of a mountain, where the repercussion of surrounding hills multiplies with terrific energy its deep and astounding echoes. The heavens seemed to be one vast reservoir of flame, which was propelled from its voluminous bed by some invisible but omnipotent agency, and threatened to fling its fiery ruin upon every thing around. In some parts, however, of the pitchy vapour by which the skies were by this time completely overspread, the lightning was seen only occasionally to glimmer in faint streaks of light, as if struggling, but unable, to escape from its prison, igniting, but too weak to burst, the impervious bosoms of those capacious magazines in which it was at once engendered and pent up. So heavy and continuous was the rain, that scarcely any thing, save those vivid bursts of light which nothing could arrest or resist, was perceptible through it. The thunder was so painfully loud, that it frequently caused the ear to throb; it seemed as if mines were momentarily springing in the heavens, and I could almost fancy that one of the sublimest fictions of heathen fable was

realized at this moment before me, and that I was hearing an assault of the Titans. The surf was raised by the wind and scattered in thin billows of foam over the esplanade, which was completely powdered with the white feathery spray. It extended several hundred yards from the beach; fish, upwards of three inches long, were found upon the flat roofs of houses in the town during the prevalence of the monsoon, either blown from the sea by the violence of the gales, or taken up in the water-spouts, which are very prevalent in this tempestuous season. When these burst, whatever they contain is frequently borne by the sweeping blast to a considerable distance overland, and deposited in the most uncongenial situations, so that now, during the violence of these tropical storms, fish are found alive on the tops of houses; nor is this any longer a matter of surprise to the established resident in India, who sees every year a repetition of this singular phenomenon.

I have mentioned the intense loudness of the thunder, but between its pauses, as the hurricane increased, the roaring of the surf was scarcely less loud, so that there was an unceasing uproar, which to those who lived near the beach was most distressing, though the sublimity of the scene fully compensated for any annoyances which were induced by this fierce collision of the elements. During the extreme violence of the storm, the heat was occasionally almost beyond endurance, particularly after the first day or two, when the wind would at intervals entirely subside, so that not a breath of air could be felt, and the punka afforded but a partial relief to that distress-

ing sensation which is caused by the oppressive stillness of the air, so well known in India whilst the monsoon prevails. This was not our only inconvenience; insects of all kinds crept along the walls, and the most disagreeable reptiles crawled over our floors. Legions of ants, cockroaches, and lizards, were forced from their dark recesses by the torrents, and absolutely invaded us. Scorpions, toads, centipedes, and even snakes, made free entrance into our apartments, as if they had been Hindoo lazar-houses for the reception of wandering and homeless reptiles. The toads, centipedes, and snakes, we could manage to destroy, but the scorpions, lizards, ants, and cockroaches, defied us by their numbers, and maintained a complete though not undisturbed possession of our chambers.

Day after day the same scene was repeated with somewhat less violence, though at intervals the might of the hurricane was truly appalling; but, during its occasional pauses, visits were paid and returned as usual, while those accustomed to the sight seemed almost to forget that there was any thing in these mighty jarrings of inanimate nature beyond its ordinary conflicts. There are no doubt many parts of the world where, during the presence of hurricanes, the wind is more impetuous than during these periodical visitations in India; but in none, I will venture to say, does the rain pour in such a mighty deluge, and in no place can the thunder and lightning be more terrific.

The monsoon continued about two months, abating towards the middle of December, when the flag-staff

was again raised, and the flag hoisted to signify that ships might safely anchor in the roadstead. It may not be amiss to observe here, that a ship bound to Madras from England having sighted any part of Ceylon, may shape her course direct for Madras flag-staff, upon which the flag is always flying, except during the periodical gales. In the night, the light may be seen five leagues from the deck, and is of great service in guiding ships clear of the Pulicate shoal. Madras roads are open to all winds except that which blows from the west. The anchorage is very foul from the number of anchors left there; though cast-iron is not the only metal which lies at the bottom in undisturbed repose, for some years ago the captain of an Indiaman, having turned a large investment into gold, had it secured in a strong box and sent to the ship. The officer, not knowing the contents of the box, and from its size little imagining that it could be extremely heavy, made use of the ordinary tackling to hoist it on board, which however was not sufficently strong for the purpose intended; for, before the box had been raised half-way up the ship's side, the tackling broke, and a fortune was in a moment precipitated into the deep, from which it was never recovered. Divers were employed without success; it is still among the anchors.

The roadstead at Madras is liable at all times to be visited by sudden and severe storms, and even in the calmest weather there is continually a heavy swell; nay, it has been noticed that all along the Coromandel coast the surf is frequently heaviest in calm weather, a circumstance for which no satisfac-

tory reason has been yet assigned. Although from the beginning of October to the middle of December is considered the most dangerous season to remain in Madras roads, nevertheless ships frequently do anchor there at all seasons, in defiance of the cautions, nay even of the most peremptory orders, from the shore; being ready to cut or slip their cables and run out to sea on the first intimation of a hurricane. The only intercourse from the town with ships in stormy weather is by the Massoolah boats, and when the surf is too high for them to go off, a flag is hoisted at the beach-house, called the foul-weather flag. While this continues flying, all communication with the shore is interrupted; yet the catamaran men will at all times venture off upon their apparently insecure rafts with letters or any small packets. These they continue to keep perfectly dry by placing them in their skull-caps, —a pointed cap made of matting, over which the folds of their turbans are so tightly twisted, as to prevent the access of the water.* Medals are awarded to such among them as distinguish themselves by saving persons when the Massoolah boats are upset, or by conveying letters of importance through the surf during the violence of the monsoons. They are frequently washed off their catamarans by the prodigious impetus of the waters; but, unless a shark happens to seize them, they immediately regain their raft by swimming, at which they are extremely expert.

* See Edinburgh Cabinet Library—British India, vol. III. chap. xvi.

CHAPTER II.

CLOSE OF THE MONSOON — SHARKS.

THE breaking up of the monsoon is frequently even more violent, if possible, than its setting in, and this happened to be the casė during the first season after my arrival in India. It was truly stupendous, and I shall never cease to remember it to the latest moment of my existence. When the stormy period had entirely passed, the sky resumed its bright and vivid azure, while its cloudless serenity seemed a sublime emblem of that undisturbed repose which reigns eternally in those regions beyond it, where "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." It is indeed no subject of common or vulgar delight to contemplate the placid and peculiar beauties of an eastern sky, where the vast expanse of the heavens is painted in one uniform tint of pale but vivid blue, over which the sun —

"Like a god of this new world,"

flings his gorgeous light, communicating to every thing which he touches a portion of his own celestial radiance, and gilding with his own glories the lesser, but still great works of Omnipotence. The bright serenity of repose — the soft uniform tone of the ceru-

lean canopy above, contrasted with the varying features of the busy scenes below—the clear sharp line of the horizon, encircling the ocean, as it were, with an azure girdle, except when casually broken by a light streak of fleecy vapour, which, by interrupting the uniformity, enhances the beauty—the boundless expanse above and below, terminable to the eye, but interminable to the mind—the glowing sun pouring from his prolific stores life and fecundity over a world fixed in the void of infinitude, and upheld there by an Omnipotent hand without any visible or known support—all this, and a thousand other objects of local sublimity, can only be partially conceived by such as have never visited those celebrated regions—

"Where all save the spirit of man is divine."

The picturesque beauties peculiar to an Oriental climate may indeed be approached, but not reached by the imaginations of such as have witnessed an Italian sky under its most favourable aspect; though its quiet summer beauty falls far, very far, short of those common only to that land of the sun—

"Where the flowers ever blossom, the beams ever shine."

Here nature, prolific to luxuriance, absolutely revels in her fecundity and her magnificence.

During the monsoon I had the good fortune to obtain an introduction to Mr. W. Daniell and his uncle, who had been both already some time in India, and with whom I agreed to travel as soon as the weather should permit. Shortly after the 15th of December the busy scene of the roadstead was renewed with fresh activity,

when my two friends and I began to prepare for a journey down the Coromandel coast. I purchased a young Arab horse, that I might have the advantage of seeing the country on our route, providing myself at the same time with a commodious palankeen, in order to have the additional advantage of a more easy conveyance whenever I might find it too hot or otherwise inconvenient to ride. My fellow-travellers determined to make use only of their palankeens, so that we were each suited precisely to our respective tastes, and ready to start towards the beginning of a year, which we had made up our minds to devote exclusively to the enjoyments of travelling. Before we left Madras, however, a circumstance occurred which I deem to be worth recording. Though sharks, as I have already stated, are seldom found in the surf, they are very numerous beyond it ; but they sometimes do venture within the swell, in expectation probably of picking up a meal from an overturned Massoolah boat.

One morning a little boy, about eight years old, happened to be washed from a catamaran which was managed by his father, who was thus early initiating him into the hardships of that mode of life which he intended him to pursue, and, before he could be rescued from the turbulent waters, a shark drew him under, and he was seen no more. The father lost not a moment, but calmly rose, and placing between his teeth a large knife which he carried sheathed in his cummerbund, plunged beneath the lashing waves. He disappeared for some time, but after a while was occasionally seen to rise and then dive under the

billows, as if actively engaged with his formidable foe. It was a period of painful suspense to those who were anxiously watching the issue from the boats outside the surf. After a while the white foam was visibly tinged with blood, which was viewed with a sensation of horror by those who could only surmise what was going on under the water. The man was again seen to rise and disappear, so that the work of death was evidently not yet complete. After some further time had elapsed, to the astonishment of all who were assembled on the beach, for by this time a considerable crowd had collected, the body of a huge shark was seen for a few moments above the whitening spray, which it completely crimsoned, and then disappeared; an instant after the man rose above the surf, and made for the shore. He seemed nearly exhausted, but had not a single mark upon his body, which bore no evidence whatever of the perilous conflict in which he had been so recently engaged. He had scarcely landed when an immense shark was cast upon the beach by the billows. It was quite dead, and was immediately dragged by the assembled natives beyond the reach of the surge. It presented a most frightful spectacle, exhibiting fatal proofs of the terrific struggle which had ensued between this ravenous tyrant of the deep and the bereaved father. He had indeed taken a most signal revenge.

On the body of the huge creature were several deep gashes, from one of which the intestines protruded. The knife had been evidently plunged into the belly, and drawn downward with unerring precision, present-

ing an immense wound nearly a yard long. There were also several deep incisions about the gills, and below the fins; in short it is impossible to describe the fearful evidences which the monster exhibited of the prowess and dexterity of its determined aggressor, who had so boldly perilled his life to revenge the death, as it was afterwards ascertained, of his only child. As soon as the shark was drawn to a place of security, it was opened, when the head and limbs of the boy were taken from its stomach. The body was completely dismembered, and the head severed from it; the different parts however were scarcely at all mutilated. It would seem that, after separation, they had been immediately swallowed without being submitted to the previous process of mastication. The moment the father saw the truncated remains of the little object of his affection, the habitual coldness of the Hindoo merged in the tenderness of the parent, and he for the moment gave way to the agonies of his heart. He threw himself upon the sand, and mourned his bereavement—

"With sad unhelpful tears;"

but soon recovering his constitutional serenity, he unrolled his dripping turban, and having, placed the severed remains of his child in the ragged depository, bore them to his fragile tenement of bamboo and palm-leaves, in order to prepare them for immediate cremation.

Upon being asked to relate the particulars of his encounter with the shark, he stated, that as soon as he had plunged into the water, which he did a few

moments after the child had been dragged under by his powerful enemy, he saw the monster in the act of swallowing its victim. He instantly made towards it, and struck it with his knife upon the gills. By this time it had completely gorged its prey, and did not at all seem disposed to enter upon the encounter to which it had been so roughly challenged. Having received a second stroke in the gills, it rose towards the surface, followed by its assailant, who kept plunging the knife into various parts of its body. The monster turned* several times to seize its adversary, who, dexterously evading the intended visitation by diving under it, renewed his attack with the knife. The shark's voracity had been so completely appeased by the meal which it had just made, that it showed little disposition to continue the conflict, until repeated trenchings from the formidable knife of its determined foe roused it to desperate resistance, when it turned again upon its back, though with less activity than these creatures are wont to do when craving for food; but the man dived rapidly under it, and, watching his opportunity, as soon as the shark regained its natural position, plunged the keen blade into its belly, and drew the weapon downward with all his strength, thus inflicting that mortal wound which the creature exhibited upon the strand. After this it made a tremendous splashing for a few moments. then sank apparently lifeless to the bottom. Seeing that the strife was at

* The shark always turns upon its back to seize its prey.

an end, the man made for the shore, as already stated, and shortly after the huge carcass was cast upon the beach.

Before we left Madras, another event occurred, which may not be considered unworthy of a place in these pages. A very spirited horse of high breed, and greatly valued by its owner, who was about to proceed with it to the opposite coast, resisted every attempt to get it into the Massoolah boat so effectually, that there was no alternative but to tow it through the surf, by attaching it to the stern, or to leave it behind. The creature took to the water willingly, gallantly stemming the billows. Its head was kept above them by the syce,* who held the rope by which it was attached to the boat's stern; but what was the man's astonishment, when they got alongside the vessel, and were about to hoist the noble animal upon deck, to find that the sharks had literally torn out its entrails! The agitation of the water prevented a discovery of the mischief until they came to get the horse on board.

In order to afford some further idea of the voraciousness of these creatures, I will state a circumstance which occurred to a lady during her passage from England to Bombay. She was at work in her cabin, sewing some riband upon a pair of shoes, when a sudden lurch of the ship overturned her work-table, and all that was on it was precipitated through the port into the sea. On the following day a huge

* An Indian groom.

shark was caught, in the stomach of which was found her shoes, needle-book, &c. which were very little injured, considering that they had been upwards of twenty-four hours in a place so very unfavourable to their preservation.

CHAPTER III.

THE SEVEN PAGODAS.—JUGGLERS.—SCULPTURED ROCKS.

We were now fully prepared for our departure, and on the 5th of January, about twelve weeks after our arrival, we commenced our journey, like Doctor Syntax, in search of the picturesque, to find which, indeed, was any thing but difficult. As we did not set off before day-break, we completed but a short stage, halting under a thick tope of trees at Vickium, a considerable village about twelve miles from the presidency. During the prevalence of the monsoon I had employed myself in studying the oral language of the country, and by the time we commenced our journey could understand it sufficiently for all the necessary purposes of travelling. We found the land well cultivated, and every thing so full of healthy and luxuriant life, from the influence of the late rains, that the whole country appeared like an extensive garden. There was nothing indeed eminently remarkable beyond this general luxuriance of nature in the inland view, but the prospect from the sea was agreeably and continually diversified by an infinite number of boats under sail, of various form and size, which dotted the clear expanse beyond the surf—for this extends all the way down the coast—their white

sails catching the sunbeams, and, as they approached nearer to the shore, casting a thousand fantastic shadows upon the liquid plain over which they were so placidly ploughing their way.

At the village where we first halted, we were vastly amused by a party of itinerant jugglers, and, as I had frequently heard of their extraordinary physical capabilities and skill in legerdemain, I was glad to have the opportunity of witnessing both. As many of their tricks are well known, and most of them have been frequently described, I shall confine myself to a description of two of their performances, one an act of manual dexterity, the other, one of the most extraordinary juggles perhaps ever practised; as I believe they are not commonly known, and have certainly never been witnessed by Europeans, except by those who have visited India. After they had exhibited a number of their ordinary tricks, such as swallowing a sword, blowing fire from the mouth, throwing the balls, &c., which are common to the most unskilful among them; one of the party, a woman, young and beautifully formed, fixed on her head a fillet of a stiff, strong texture, to which were fastened, at equal distances, twenty pieces of string of equal lengths, with a common noose at the end of each. Under her arm she carried a basket, in which twenty fowl's eggs were carefully deposited. Her basket, the fillet, and the nooses, were severally examined by my companions and myself—there was evidently no deception. It was broad daylight, the basket was of the simplest construction, the eggs and strings were all manifestly what they were repre-

sented to be; nor, in fact, had the woman any thing about her to aid deception, had she been disposed to practise it. She advanced alone and stood before us, within a few feet of where we were seated. She then began to move rapidly round upon a spot not more than eighteen inches in diameter, from which she never for an instant deviated, though, after a few moments, her rotation had become so exceedingly rapid as to render it all but painful to look at her. She absolutely spun round like a top.

When her body had reached its extreme point of acceleration, she quietly drew down one of the strings which had formed a horizontal circle round her, and put an egg into the noose; when this was secured, she jerked it back to its original position, still continuing her gyrations with undiminished velocity, and repeating the process until she had secured the whole twenty eggs in the nooses previously prepared to receive them. She projected them rapidly from her hand the moment she had secured them, until at length the whole were flying round her in one unbroken circular line. After the eggs had been thus strung, she continued her motion for full five minutes, without the least diminution of her velocity, to our undissembled astonishment; when, taking the strings one by one, she displaced the eggs from their respective nooses, laid them in her basket, and then in one instant stopped, without the movement of a limb, or even the vibration of a muscle, as if she had been suddenly fixed into marble. Her countenance was perfectly calm; she exhibited not the slightest distress from her extraordinary exertions, but received our

applauses with an apparent modesty of demeanour which was no doubt rather the result of constitutional apathy than refinement of feeling, for these jugglers are generally among the most depraved of their caste.

The mildness of the Hindoo has been frequently extolled by writers who have only superficially considered this general trait of national character. Mildness is at best but an equivocal virtue; for if it proceed from the mere absence of emotion, which it but too often does, it is as great a moral defect as the most vehement paroxysm of passion: in fact, the elements of good are far more prevalent in the latter than in the former. Negative good is always allied to positive evil; they are the points of contact in the sphere of human infirmity, and so closely approximate, that they may be said to merge in one inseparable union. The absence of good pre-supposes the presence of evil, which, whether passive or active, moral or practical, is, in every circumstance and under every variety of modification, still evil. Mildness is often the symptom of an insensibility that is not to be softened by the appeals of human sympathy, or roused into action by the apprehension of dangers which are distant or uncertain; it is only really a virtue when it is remote from those cold and negative qualities of the moral temperament which can find no centre of attraction beyond the narrow circle of self-love. The mildness of the Hindoo is mere apathy; and that apathy which would cause us to witness a murder with indifference is infinitely more detestable, and surely a greater moral enormity, than the passion which, after a desperate conflict with a man's better

feelings, works him up, in the frenzy of its efferves-cence, to take away the life of a fellow-creature.

The next thing to which I alluded as intending to record, was an instance of visual illusion, as far as my experience and even my belief goes, unprecedented in the annals of jugglery. After the exhibition of the eggs, as just described, a stout, ferocious-looking fel-low stepped forward, with a common wicker basket of the country, which he begged we would carefully examine. This we accordingly did; it was of the slightest texture, and admitted the light through a thousand apertures. Under this fragile covering he placed a child about eight years old, an interesting little girl, habited in the only garb which nature had provided for her, perfect of frame and elastic of limb —a model for a cherub, and scarcely darker than a child of southern France. When she was properly secured, the man, with a lowering aspect, asked her some question, which she instantly answered; and as the thing was done within a few feet from the spot on which we were seated, the voice appeared to come so distinctly from the basket, that I felt at once satis-fied there was no deception. They held a conversa-tion for some moments, when the juggler, almost with a scream of passion, threatened to kill her. There was a stern reality in the whole scene which was per-fectly dismaying; it was acted to the life, but terrible to see and hear. The child was heard to beg for mercy, when the man seized a sword, placed his foot upon the frail wicker covering under which his supposed victim was so piteously supplicating his forbearance, and, to my absolute consternation and

horror, plunged it through, withdrawing it several times, and repeating the plunge with all the blind ferocity of an excited demon. By this time his countenance exhibited an expression fearfully indicative of the most frantic of human passions. The shrieks of the child were so real and distracting, that they almost curdled for a few moments the whole mass of my blood: my first impulse was to rush upon the monster and fell him to the earth; but he was armed, and I defenceless. I looked at my companions—they appeared to be pale and paralyzed with terror; and yet these feelings were somewhat neutralized by the consciousness that the man could not dare to commit a deliberate murder in the broad eye of day, and before so many witnesses; still the whole thing was appalling. The blood ran in streams from the basket; the child was heard to struggle under it; her groans fell horridly upon the ear; her struggles smote painfully upon the heart. The former were gradually subdued into a faint moan, and the latter into a slight rustling sound; we seemed to hear the last convulsive gasp which was to set her innocent soul free from the gored body, when, to our inexpressible astonishment and relief, after muttering a few cabalistic words, the juggler took up the basket; but no child was to be seen. The spot was indeed died with blood; but there were no mortal remains, and, after a few moments of undissembled wonder, we perceived the little object of our alarm coming towards us from among the crowd. She advanced and saluted us, holding out her hand for our donations, which we bestowed with hearty good-will; she received them

with a most graceful salaam, and the party left us, well satisfied with our more than expected gratuity. What rendered the deception the more extraordinary was, that the man stood aloof from the crowd during the whole performance,—there was not a person within several feet of him.

Towards evening we set out for Covelong, which we reached about nine o'clock: this is a miserable town, about three or four hundred yards from the sea. In 1750 the French obtained possession of it by a stratagem. In 1752 it surrendered to Captain Clive, who may be said to be the founder of British influence in India, on condition that the commandant should be allowed to carry away his own effects, which proved to be a great number of turkeys and a large quantity of snuff, commodities in which it appears he did not consider it beneath the dignity of the commandant of an Indian town to deal. After the capture of Chingleput, the district to which Covelong appertains, the fortifications of the town were destroyed.

On the following morning, before sunrise, we proceeded on our journey towards Mahabalipuram, one of the most distinguished and sacred spots of the Carnatic, which we reached about three hours before noon. There was little variation in the scenery from what we had seen on the preceding day; but, upon our arrival at this celebrated place, we were exceedingly struck with its most imposing and picturesque appearance. In the neighbourhood are ruins of several Hindoo temples, generally known under the somewhat anomalous designation of THE SEVEN PAGODAS,

as no such number exists here: they are dedicated to Vishnoo, the preserving power of the Indian Triad. Mahabalipuram signifies the city of the great Bali, a character famous in Hindoo fable, and respecting whom some very valuable information is given in the notes to that sublime poem, The Curse of Kehama, by Robert Southey.

On the beach stands a very ancient Hindoo temple, much injured by constant exposure to the sea-air and to the violence of the monsoons. Antiquaries, and all searchers into the primitive history of the Hindoos, have been puzzled to fix the date of this temple and those in the neighbourhood; the style of architecture is perfectly unlike that of any other part of India. It is said that the Egyptians colonized here; and there are some ingenious theorists who give to the Indians the priority over the Egyptians in the attainment of a settled style of architecture of the most stately description, when all the rest of the world were of nomadic habits, living in tents, or in the umbrageous recesses of the jungles. The character of the architecture of THE SEVEN PAGODAS is a chaste blending of the simple with the ornamental; it is remarkably beautiful, and the sculpture, with which it is somewhat profusely embellished, is of the very highest quality. The sea has gained much upon this coast, and it is therefore to be presumed has swept much away; it has certainly encroached to some extent upon the walls of Madras within the recollection of many persons now living.*

* Bishop Heber mentions the sea as having receded from all parts of the Coromandel coast; but the authority of a person,

About a quarter of a mile from the beach at Mahabalipuram are some very curiously sculptured rocks, exhibiting specimens of art absolutely astonishing, even in this age of fastidious refinement. The impress of true genius is really stamped upon them in a most marvellous degree, especially when we consider the remote era to which they belong. Many interesting particulars respecting the ancient Hindoos may be collected from the fine basso-relievos, with which these rocks are literally covered. The dress of the women, represented on them, is much the same as that now so common on the coast of Malabar, where the lovely Hindoo, as perfect in form as the finest antique, goes uncovered to the waist. The men are exhibited as wearing turbans scarcely differing in form from those now worn, and the women as having large pendants in their ears, with bangles on their hands and feet, thus proving the great antiquity of the costume so strictly observed by the modern Hindoo. The pyramidal arrangement of the

however learned, wise, or good, so short a time resident in India, and moreover precluded by his pastoral office from a very minute observation of tropical phenomena, is not to be strictly relied on, more especially, too, as the memoranda of his journal were hastily put together, are frequently nothing more than mere hints for future and weightier investigation, and were never intended, in their present shape, to meet the public eye. The mistakes into which Bishop Heber has naturally fallen, from his inexperience of many of the subjects upon which he touches, and which a more intimate acquaintance with them would have enabled him to correct, causes the Anglo-Indian reader to regret that his journal was ever published; it is full of inaccuracies, and is often very foolishly quoted as an authority where it is least to be relied on.

water-vessels upon the head, so universally adopted by the Hindoo women when they return from the gauts or tanks with water, is also most accurately represented upon this rocky tablet. There is in one of the chambers of these celebrated rocks a most spirited representation of Durga seated on a lion, and attacking Mahishasur,* which might be compared, without suffering by the comparison, to some of the best specimens of sculpture, if we except the unrivalled monuments of Grecian art, to be found among the works of the middle ages, or indeed, of any subsequent age, up to the seventeenth century. It is a very remarkable fact that the style of architecture in the neighbourhood of the SEVEN PAGODAS, is unlike that of any other part of India, a circumstance which has greatly puzzled and drawn forth various speculations from the learned in Indian antiquities.

The large sculptured rock is from ninety to a hundred feet in length, and about thirty in height. Its surface forms a vast tablet, executed in very bold basso-relievo, representing various extravagant fictions of Hindoo fable. Many sketches have been made of it, and some published; but they have been evidently done by mere tyros, whose crude and inaccurate delineations are not in the least to be depended on. There are two elephants on this stupendous tablet, most exquisitely modelled; the larger is seventeen feet two inches in length; its companion, a female, is somewhat smaller, and placed immediately behind. There are several young ones represented at

* This contest is a personification of Virtue, under the form of Durga, triumphing over Vice, under that of Mahishasur.

play between their legs. The natural ease of attitude and vigour of action displayed in this interesting group are truly astonishing. They are done with a truth and spirit which give them that sort of symmetrical analogy to the living animal which the antique statues bear to the human figure. In a word, they are masterpieces of their kind. Wherever sculptures of the sacred bull are found, they are almost invariably highly finished specimens of art; indeed it is evident that the most eminent masters were always employed to form these senseless objects of Hindoo veneration. It is really amazing to what perfection some of the fine arts were brought in this remote country, in ages so long anterior to European civilization.

Upon a line with the sculptured rock is a spacious excavation, with a long façade of highly-ornamented columns. The interior is astonishingly rich in sculpture. There are several chambers of different sizes, all hewn out of the solid stone, which is a hard unlaminated granite. This magnificent work of human ingenuity and labour is upon the road towards Madras. About a mile south of the village is a cluster of five beautifully decorated temples, cut out of huge blocks of granite, which are truly marvellous specimens of taste and skill. They are of various dimensions and heights; the highest, which is by far the finest, as well as I could judge from a mere admeasurement by the eye, is about fifty feet from the base to the summit. This temple is excavated into stories, all exceedingly rich in sculptured decorations. Indeed the neighbourhood of Mahabalipuram abounds

in these wonders, as they may truly be called, of human art and industry. The sculpture on the exterior of these temples has suffered greatly from Mahomedan violence; many large masses have also been separated by lightning; still these stupendous edifices will never cease to be majestic even in ruins. Close by one of them are two statues, representing an elephant and a lion, the one about as large as life, the other much larger. They are both, especially the elephant, admirably executed, and afford specimens of manual skill in the use of the chisel, as well as of taste in design and conception, unrivalled by modern art. There never has been any thing like a correct representation given of these noble efforts of human ingenuity. The plates in the Transactions of the ASIATIC SOCIETY are miserable failures; they are positive libels upon the truth and spirit of the originals; the figures are monstrous exaggerations; the grouping is stiff and awkward. One would imagine, by consulting these plates, that the temples at the SEVEN PAGODAS were most barbarous in design and execution, whereas they are admirable in both. It is really to be lamented that these imperfect, not to say false, representations should be suffered to come before the world under the sanction of such a highly respectable body as the ASIATIC SOCIETY, only because they are transmitted to the library of that valuable institution by bungling amateurs in art, who are glad to have an importance attached to their imperfect designs, and therefore offer them without any other recompense, when really authentic information is to be purchased. The absurd importance which has been attached to the rude



sketches of persons who know nothing of drawing beyond what they have picked up at school is not only to be deplored but reprobated; especially when better things are attainable. It is at once an imposition upon public credulity and an insult to public taste. Mahabalipuram, from the transcendent beauty of its antiquities, deserves to have been more respectfully treated than it has been in the engravings to which I have alluded. It is a spot, perhaps, more rich in artificial wonders than any other on the vast continent of India, where they may be absolutely said to abound.

The temple represented by Mr. Daniell in the illustrative plate is of compact and beautiful stonework, and stands upon a rock jutting from the land into the sea. It is the remnant, such at least is the oral tradition of the place, of an ancient city, which has been overthrown by the constantly encroaching waters, and of which this structure alone remains entire. The resident Bramins aver the fact of the former existence of this city, and of its final overthrow by the sea; but Doctor Babington, in a paper communicated by him to the Asiatic Society, has expressed a doubt of this fact: his arguments, however, do not appear to me to be so conclusive as to decide the question. I do not stay to enter into a refutation of them here, though they may be easily answered, as my object is to describe things and scenery as they are or have been, not to speculate upon doubtful or mooted points of Hindoo archaiology; nevertheless I cannot refrain from observing, with reference to Doctor Babington's paper, that his arguments have not in

the least staggered my belief in the oral tradition of the Bramins, respecting the former existence of a city on the spot where this pagoda now stands.

At some little distance above the sculptured rock there is a remarkable mass of unfractured granite, which has been so nicely poised by nature upon a pointed base, forming an obtuse inverted cone, that it may be easily rocked by a single arm, though a hundred would not dislodge it from its ancient bed. If it were squared, judging of course from a very imperfect admeasurement, I should imagine that it would form a cube of at least twenty feet. It resembles the cromlechs to be found in Cornwall and other parts of Great Britain. During our stay at this extraordinary place, a very melancholy circumstance occurred. The man who was charged with the tappal or post-bag, while on his way from a neighbouring town, had been assailed by an alligator, as he was crossing a sheet of water which intersected his route. The creature attacked him in the middle of the stream, and though he escaped being devoured by the successful energy of his struggles, he was nevertheless so severely bitten, that he died a few minutes after he gained the land, which he managed to do with extreme difficulty. His body was dreadfully lacerated. The tappal was afterwards found in the water.

We spent several days at Mahabalipuram, examining all the extraordinary monuments of art in its neighbourhood, which abounds with objects of natural as well as of artificial interest. Mr. William Daniell took the opportunity, during our stay, of making several very accurate and finished drawings; and

here he found subjects in every respect worthy of his pencil. Some of the magnificent fruits of his and his uncle's labours have been already offered to the world in their ORIENTAL SCENERY. Of this noble production it is not too much to say, that it stands at this moment unrivalled for accuracy of delineation among the productions of modern art, and yet it remains almost unnoticed.

CHAPTER IV.

WANDIWASH.—TIGER-SLAYER.—HINDOO FESTIVAL.

From Mahabalipuram, quitting the coast, we proceeded towards Chingleput, crossed the Paliar river, and halted at Outramalore. We left this miserable town early in the afternoon, and stopped for the night at Wandiwash. This place is remarkable, at least to Europeans, for a severe battle which was fought between the English and French troops, the former commanded by Colonel Coote, the latter by Monsieur de Lally, certainly one of the most accomplished officers of his time. In September 1759, in an attack upon Wandiwash, the British had been repulsed; but in the November of the same year, it was taken by Colonel Coote with very little loss. During the January following, that decisive battle just mentioned was fought here between the British and French armies, commanded by the officers above named, when the latter were defeated with a prodigious number killed, and were soon after obliged to abandon the country. The whole weight of the action fell upon the Europeans in either army: the sepoys merely looked on. After the conflict had been decided, the native commanders highly complimented Colonel Coote upon so signal a

victory, thanking him at the same time for the sight of a battle such as they had never before witnessed.

Wandiwash, with the adjacent territory, is now comprehended in the southern division of the Madras collectorate. On arriving at this town we took shelter in one of the gateways of the fort, which, with the walls of our tents, we contrived to render tolerably habitable for a night, and except for the occasional visitation of a few bandicoots,* we should have had nothing to complain of; but these creatures, towards which I have always felt an invincible disgust, considerably abridged our slumbers. The fort which surrounds this dismal town was in a most ruinous condition, and manned by about half a dozen naked, half-starved wretches, who appeared like so many grim warlocks; indeed they seemed to be scarcely so near akin to humanity, so "villainously ill-favoured" were they, and forbidding. They were fakeers or houseless vagrants; glad to resort to any place, however dilapidated and comfortless, so long as it could afford them a temporary shelter.

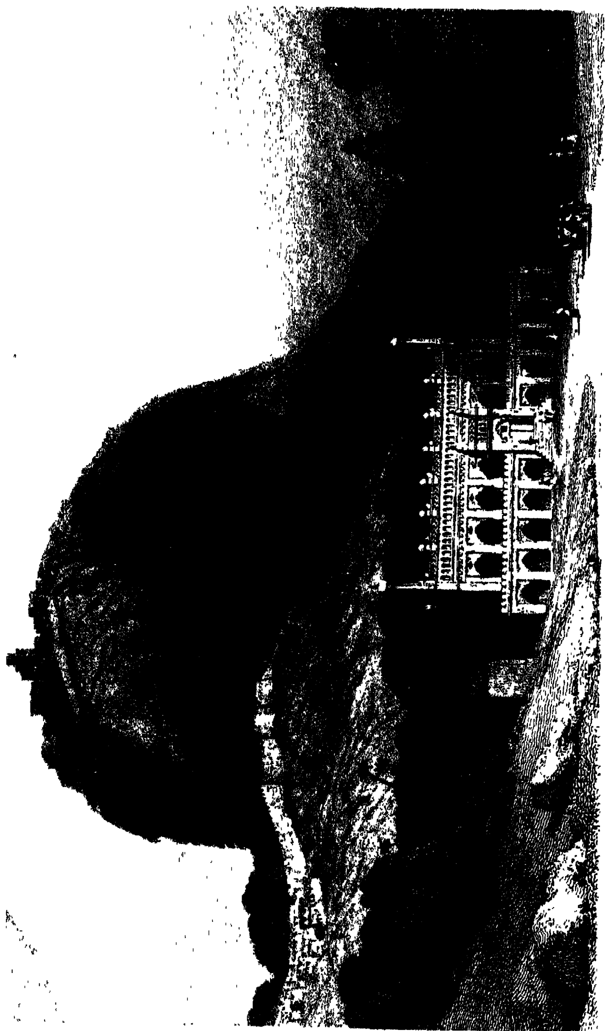
Upon quitting Wandiwash the following morning, we found the country sufficiently pleasant, though, as far as regarded the picturesque, deficient in wood. The prickly pear was much more abundant than the mango, the tamarind, or those more stately forest trees which tower so majestically above the dwarfish growth of an Indian jungle. That hirsute and inelegant plant, so disagreeably prevalent in most tro-

* A very large species of rat, almost without hair, and the back covered with bristles, like a wild hog.

pical countries, is here so prodigal of growth, that it overspreads the very roads, which indeed is almost invariably the case where there is a lack of more interesting vegetation.

We reached Gingee about two hours before noon. The fort stands upon a lofty and precipitous rock, and is considered impregnable. Gingee has always been regarded as the strongest town in the Carnatic. The hill upon which the principal fort—for there are seven—stands, is extremely unhealthy, and the mortality among the French during the ten years that Gingee was in their possession, is said to have been prodigious. The fortified works are admirably constructed, and eminently imposing. The seven gates of Raje Ghur, the principal hill-fort, had been destroyed by Tippoo's order, as well as a bridge which connected two of the hills. At the foot of the mountain there is a beautiful mosque, built by the Mahomedans on the site of an ancient Hindoo temple, which was a very common practice with them. They spared no pains to mortify the pride of their vanquished enemies.

Tigers are very numerous in this neighbourhood, and some of the natives are remarkably expert in destroying them. During our stay here, for we made a halt of two days, a bullock was killed and taken off by one of these feline plunderers. The print of its foot was to be traced as far as the next village, about six or seven miles from Gingee, where we lost sight of it. Before we left this town, we had a singular evidence of the skill of the natives in destroying the tiger, with which this part of the country is infested.



The morning after our arrival it was signified to us that there was a large royal tiger in a nullah* near the town. This was soon confirmed by the appearance of a native who was preparing to attack it single-handed. The man was short, not robust but compactly made, sinewy and active, having a countenance remarkable for its expression of calm determination. He was entirely naked above the hips, below which he simply wore coarse linen trowsers reaching about half-way down the thigh. He was armed with a ponderous knife, the blade of which was exceedingly wide and thick, with an edge almost as keen as a razor. On the left arm he bore a small conical shield, about eighteen inches in diameter, covered with hide, and studded with brass, having a point of the same metal projecting from the boss. My companions and myself walked with this intrepid little Hindoo to the lair of the sleeping foe. We were the less apprehensive of any personal danger, knowing that the tiger is a very cowardly animal and seldom makes an open attack; and further that it always prefers attacking a native to a European. We soon reached the nullah and discovered the beautiful beast at the extremity basking in the sun. Its proportions were prodigious. I have never seen one larger. The nullah was narrow, but the bottom tolerably free from inequalities, so that the area was more than usually favourable for the operations of the undaunted tiger-slayer.

As soon as we reached the spot, the man boldly

* Nullahs are water-courses, which are generally dry except during the rains.

leaped into the hollow, at the same time uttering a shrill cry in order to arouse his enemy from its slumbers. Upon seeing its resolute aggressor slowly advance, the animal raised itself upon its fore legs with a terrific howl. As the little Hindoo continued to approach, which he did slowly, and with his dark eyes keenly fixed upon the face of his formidable foe, the tiger rose to its full height, and began to lash its sides furiously with its tail, yet it evidently appeared to be in a state of embarrassment. Still the man advanced deliberately but undauntedly; the uneasiness and rage of the excited beast increased with every step; at length it crouched, evidently with a determination to make its terrific spring. The man suddenly stopped, when the tiger paused, turned up its head, and, uttering a horrible noise between a snarl and a howl, made one step forward, and sprang towards its victim, who instantly bent his body, received the animal's paws upon his shield, dashed the knife into its body, and fell under, but almost entirely beyond the extremities of, his wounded enemy. The creature turned upon its back; the little Hindoo regained his feet in an instant, striking the prostrate tiger with astonishing quickness and precision a desperate blow upon the throat, which completely severed the windpipe, at the same moment springing, with the quickness of thought, beyond the reach of the monster's claws. The tiger died almost immediately. When assured that it was positively past doing any more mischief—for it had done much in its time—we descended into the nullah. The gash in the animal's body was terrific. The lower region of the heart

had been wounded, and the intestines cut through. By way of a trophy, the victor deliberately skinned his dead enemy, which he soon accomplished, and with great dexterity, and then returned, in the pride of power, with the token of victory upon his shoulders. He obtained from us two or three pagodas, which he considered a most liberal reward of his bravery, and towards the close of the day we proceeded towards Trinomalee.

This is a ruinous town of considerable extent. It was here that the combined armies under the celebrated Hyder Ally and the Nizam were so signally defeated, in 1767, by Colonel Smith, when the Nizam lost seventy pieces of cannon. It stands upon the acclivity of a rugged mountain upwards of two miles in circumference, which has upon its summit a small chapel held in extreme veneration by the Hindoos; it being the current belief among them, that whoever should profane its sanctity, by entering within its sacred walls, would be immediately consumed by subterranean fire. None but the officiating Bramins are permitted to enter it. The pagoda is considered the loftiest in the Carnatic, being two hundred and twenty feet high. The town of Trinomalee still exhibits the sad effects of the dreadful ravages of war. There is an air of repulsive desolation about it that chills the heart, as the eye gazes upon the fearful results of human ambition. In India man has everywhere put his varied signature to the magnificent volume of nature; his hand-writing is upon every leaf, which, like an illuminated page, becomes the more resplendent from the artificial decoration. The

mighty God gifted his creature with the power of adorning his works, and nowhere has that power been so transcendently displayed as in the eastern world; it is indeed most marvellously conspicuous in those prodigious evidences of the derivative energies of the human mind from the great Fountain of Omnipotence which so eminently adorn this beautiful country; man has here fully shown that he is

"The paragon of animals."

But while we behold such undeniable tokens of human greatness, we cannot at the same time but sigh to perceive that the marks of human ferocity are equally conspicuous; ruin and devastation too frequently meet the eye, and wring from it the tear of bitter sympathy, as the fierce passions of man's heart are forced upon our reluctant contemplations by the wrecks of what was once most noble and magnificent in art, scattered in crumbling ruins by the iron hand of war, and which are everywhere so sadly exhibited to the observation of the traveller. The houses in Trinomalee are all in a most dilapidated state; there are consequently very few inhabitants, and those are of the lowest class. The pagoda is extremely grand, and once contained much treasure; Kummer-ul-dien Khan, Tippoo Saib's commander-in-chief, is said to have plundered it of a lac of pagodas at the commencement of the war, and to have made a dreadful slaughter of the inhabitants of the town. Many of the Bramins were unmercifully massacred; their temple was most wantonly desecrated; cattle were stalled within the hallowed pre-

cincts of the sanctuary;—but no subterranean fire appeared to swallow up this inhuman ravager. The streets are now almost entirely overgrown with the prickly pear and other hardy plants, that always occupy those spots which the foot of man has deserted.

Quitting Trinomalee by daybreak, we crossed the Panaur river towards Tiagar, which we reached to enjoy a tolerably early breakfast. The road lay through an extremely dense forest, which extended many miles on all sides. The prints of tigers' feet very frequently appeared, as if to remind us of the probable proximity of such unwelcome fellow-travellers. We saw a herd of deer and of black antelopes in a vista of the jungle; but they were so shy, that I could not approach near enough to secure a haunch. In the vicinity of Manarureput, a village through which we passed, formerly of some consequence and of considerable extent, are a number of choultries and small Hindoo temples. The neighbourhood abounds with tamarind-trees of an extremely large growth. Every house and hovel in the village was unroofed by the troops under the command of General Meadows on their return from Trichinopoly. There are scarcely any inhabitants in the place; and the few who are seen there appear to be reduced to the last stage of human bereavement. The country round is wild, and the jungle infested with beasts of prey.

Tiagar, the next stage at which we halted, is a rocky hill strongly fortified; there is nothing striking either in it, save its repulsive gloominess; or in the

country round it. Our road lay through a thick forest, and the only diversity which the scene presented was a range of beautiful hills to the westward. On our way from Tiagar to Tanjore, we passed Rungenagur, where there is a small fort built upon a rock, which offered little claim to our attention; thence we passed through Volconda, where there is a handsome Hindoo temple. The country about this town is well wooded, but presents nothing remarkable either in its general character or local features.

On the evening of the fifteenth day, after quitting Madras, we reached Tanjore. In more remote ages this city was the seat of learning in the south of India. Within its once celebrated walls the philosopher and the poet have

"Fretted their little hour upon the stage,"

but have long since accompanied their works to an eternal oblivion—"the place thereof knoweth them no more." Tanjore contains two fortresses. The smaller one is a mile in circumference, very strong and in good repair; its walls are surmounted by thick ramparts, with cavaliers at each corner. To the larger fortress, which is similarly fortified, and in which the Rajah resides, the smaller is united on one side. This latter contains a beautiful pagoda, of which the chief building exhibits, perhaps, the finest specimen of a pyramidal temple to be found in Hindostan; within it there is a huge statue of a bull, most exquisitely sculptured from a block of black granite. Behind the larger fort the country is covered with rice-

fields and magnificent topes* of trees, while the prospect is terminated by a lofty chain of mountains.

During our stay at Tanjore, a grand Hindoo festival was observed, which we had consequently the opportunity of witnessing. In the evening the Rajah attended by his court proceeded from the palace, with all the pomp of an eastern potentate, to a spot about a mile and half from the forts, where he performed the important ceremony of shooting a silver arrow against the stem of a plantain-tree, the object of which was to ascertain whether the deity who presided over the harvest was likely to be propitious. The test was simple—it required no sage to expound the oracle; this was done by the Rajah himself, who was in truth something of a simpleton. If much sap followed the wound, it was an unerring sign that the ensuing season of rain would be fruitful; if little, the reverse.

From Tanjore we crossed the country to Trichinopoly, as our journey was directed more by circumstances, or perhaps caprice, than by any settled arrangement; we went, in fact, just whither our fancies led us. Trichinopoly is a city of considerable eminence. It is familiar to the ears of Europeans as having its name attached to those beautiful gold chains for which it is so celebrated; but it has been rendered further celebrated by a four years' siege which it sustained from the French, commenced in 1751, when, though in every respect but wretchedly provided, it was defended by the skill and intrepidity of Lawrence, Clive, Kirkpatrick, Dalton, and other officers, whose

* A tope is a grove or plantation.

extraordinary military talents, combined with the steady courage of the British grenadiers, preserved the city from falling into the hands of the French. We stayed here but one night, and on the following morning proceeded towards Salem, a small town about sixty miles to the north-east, at which we arrived after a rather active march of two days.

This is a most remarkable neighbourhood; it abounds almost as much as Mahabalipuram with those amazing monuments of art so profusely scattered over the vast peninsula of the east. The morning after our arrival at Salem we moved onwards to Tritchengur, about two or three miles to the south-west. Here are two very celebrated temples; the principal, however, though more sacred, is much the least splendid: this we visited first. It is situated on the summit of a lofty hill, which we ascended with some labour, passing through a great number of highly-ornamented choultries.* The architecture of this edifice, though by no means deficient in ornament, is perfectly simple, but at the same time massy and imposing; its strength is sufficiently confirmed by the number of generations which it has stood uninjured in such an exposed situation; still towering in venerable majesty upon the height,

* Choultries are buildings open on every side, for the accommodation of travellers; the roof is supported by columns, which are sometimes highly ornamented: these are Hindoo structures. The serai is a Mahomedan building for the same purpose; it consists of a large open area enclosed by high walls, in which are a number of recesses. The serai has no architectural ornament, except on the gateways.

deriding the powers of the storm and the influence of time, as if proud at once of its strength and its antiquity. The scenery all the way up the hill is exceedingly picturesque. We ascended by a road cut at intervals through the solid rock, where the ascent was aided by steps. About midway to the temple, a short distance out of the path, is a large hooded snake, an object of great veneration among the Hindoos, carved upon the surface of the rock; it is full eighty feet in length, and of corresponding thickness, but cut with extreme delicacy, and is a very faithful representation. On either side of it there are steps hewn in the natural stone, for the more easy ascent of the devotees, who come hither in great numbers to worship the sacred monster. From the portico of the temple, which stands at the very verge of a tremendous and abrupt declivity, the view is magnificent, commanding, from its great elevation, a vast tract of country richly diversified. Some architectural features of a more modern date have been added to this temple; they are easily distinguishable, and offer a beautiful contrast to the older portions of the structure, which are of the highest antiquity, and in good preservation. We were assured, by one of the resident Bramins, that we were the first Europeans who had been admitted within the adytum of this venerated heathen sanctuary.

On our return, we visited the less sacred but far more splendid structure: here Mr. William Daniell completed the drawing from which the engraving is made that represents a portion of this magnificent subject. This temple is built in the centre of an

extensive area surrounded by a colonnade. Occasionally between the pillars, fakeers, pilgrims, and other temporary residents, for vagrancy is one of the great nuisances of this country, have thrown up partitions, and thus formed tolerably comfortable habitations. The gateway of the temple represented in the engraving is a remarkably fine specimen of pyramidal architecture, in which Hindostan is so rich. The entrance to the main building is through the centre of the base, forming a large and lofty passage with a flat roof. Above this are five distinct stories; so that I should think the building must exceed the height of a hundred feet. The exterior of this structure is very splendidly ornamented, but bears the marks of a much more modern date than the temple on the hill; it is covered with the richest tracery, projecting in the boldest relief from the foundation to the summit, which is surmounted by five styles or cullices, supposed to have some cryptic reference to one of the principal Hindoo deities, too sacred for the profane understandings of the vulgar. The temple, which is several yards within the gateway, to which it is far inferior both in external grandeur and variety of decoration, is a flat-roofed building supported upon an immense number of elegant columns, which, though they all bear precisely the same character, are nevertheless every one differently embellished, showing at once the amazing fertility of invention of the persons who erected these stupendous edifices, their taste, their manual skill, and their perfect knowledge of architecture. The noblest monuments of ancient Greece and Rome must yield in splendour



to the wonderful structures of this most extraordinary country; there is certainly nothing in the whole world that exceeds them for magnificence of design and grandeur of effect. The mighty dome and gallery of St. Peter's sinks into comparative insignificance before some of those incomparable monuments of remotely ancient and comparatively modern art to be found in Hindostan. History indeed has left us some faint records of the amazing efforts of human ingenuity exhibited in the vast cities of Nineveh and Babylon, and which appear to have been again realized by the imagination of Martin, who seems born to be the founder of a city that should eclipse them both. These mighty capitals of still more mighty empires have passed away, together with every memorial of them; but there still exist monuments as noble, which challenge the absolute wonder of the traveller, among the remains of Hindoo architecture. No one who has traversed those fine districts of central Hindostan, which have excited at once the admiration and astonishment of foreigners, will readily conceive that the greatest cities of antiquity ever presented sublimer monuments of art than are now to be seen, in all their primitive grandeur, in this populous and fruitful region.

The less sacred of the temples at Tritchengur is not so much frequented by rigid devotees as the more venerated sanctuary on the hill; but it always presents a larger concourse of persons, a great number of whom resort thither for water, which is obtained from a deep well just within the gateway. Over this well there is a statue of a bull built of stone

finely stuccoed; it is of gigantic proportions. There is a second statue of the same sacred animal under a stone canopy at some little distance, but much smaller; they are both well executed, though inferior to many I have seen. The descent to the water under the larger figure is by a very excellent flight of stone steps. The number of steps I could not ascertain; but, from the depth of the shaft, there must be a great many. It is extremely interesting to see the young Hindoo women, almost invariably beautiful in form and feature, emerging from this subterranean retreat with their water-vessels upon their heads, and silently pursuing their way homewards under their elegant burdens, which they carry with inimitable ease and grace. The entrance to the well is through the breast of the bull, where there is a large opening, from which some idea may be formed of the colossal size of the figure.

We remained at Tritchengur several days in tents, which we pitched under a tope of trees in the neighbourhood of the temples, fully engaged in making memoranda of the natural and artificial beauties with which this part of the country abounds.

CHAPTER V.

TANJORE.—TONDY.—RAMISERAM.

Leaving Tritchengur, we retraced our steps to Trichinopoly, thence to Tanjore, and from the latter place proceeded to Ramiseram, whence we proposed, after visiting the celebrated waterfall at Puppanassum, crossing over to the island of Ceylon. After advancing a few miles from Tanjore, we found the aspect of the country to change considerably. It had now very much the appearance of an English landscape, and consequently gave rise to many agreeable associations. This peculiarity seemed to increase as we approached Pettacotta, but did not exist beyond it. Here date-trees are very numerous and large. The road led through beautiful vistas, well cultivated on either side, giving us the idea of a happy population who had plenty and fruitfulness around them. The number of choultries in this neighbourhood shows at once the care which has been taken for the accommodation of the traveller and of the devotee; and a very excellent accommodation they afford. These buildings are considered an incontestable evidence of the sanctity of the neighbourhood in which they are erected, as they are more especially built to shelter the numerous pilgrims who may happen to be on their way to some

sacred shrine—though the general traveller is allowed to resort to them—so that where choultries are numerous, it may be taken for granted that devotees abound. We were overtaken by several very heavy storms after we left Tanjore, and these buildings afforded us, on more occasions than one, a welcome shelter. In one of them, my servant, in drawing a loose stone out of a hole in the floor, was bitten by some reptile, which I at first feared was a snake. I heard him cry out, and upon turning my head perceived him to be much agitated, staring wildly at the fore-finger of his left hand, which he held firmly grasped in the right, with the tip only exposed to view. When I asked him what had happened, he was so alarmed that he could scarcely articulate; he, however, pointed towards the hole whence he had withdrawn the stone, when, upon examination, I discovered a large scorpion at the bottom of it. On perceiving this, the man regained his self-possession, for he also fancied that a snake had bitten him, killed the reptile, and placing a portion of its inside upon a rag, applied it to the wound. After this he merely complained of a slight pain in the hand and wrist for a few hours. It had entirely subsided by the next morning, and he felt no further inconvenience.

After a very agreeable journey from Pettacotta, we reached the coast at Cottapatam, and proceeded with the sea in view as far as Tondy. Here the country is very barren, and a thick thorny jungle overspreads the prospect. The cocoa-nut tree is indeed abundant upon the coast; though the inland aspect is anything

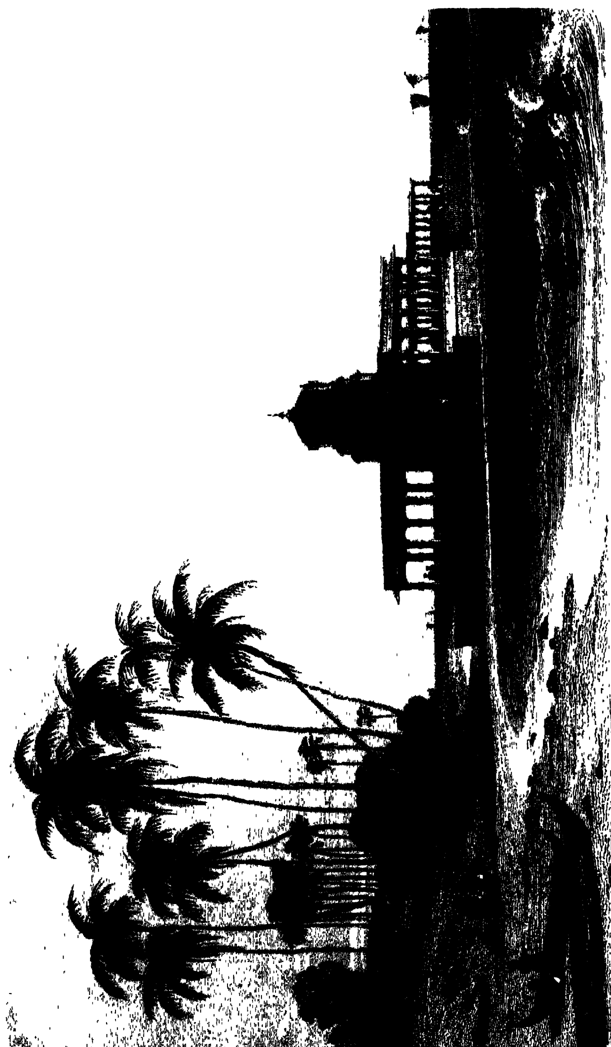
but cheering to the traveller's eye. The chatta, or umbrella-tree, begins here to be plentiful; it is as like an umbrella as possible when it happens to take that particular figure, which it very frequently does, forming a perfect concave canopy upon an upright branchless stem, while its proportions are sometimes so perfect as to induce the idea that nature had called in the aid of art to correct her luxuriance, and direct it into the more agreeable trammels of exact proportion and elegant uniformity. It is, however, sometimes extremely fantastic in its growth, the stem twisting into the most extraordinary convolutions, and presenting the very antithesis of uniformity and harmonious proportion. It is nevertheless always beautiful, even in its extravagance, and is perhaps, next to the banyan-tree, the most singular production of the vegetable kingdom.

The taur-palm, or toddy-tree, is likewise very abundant in the neighbourhood of Tondy. From this tree a juice is extracted in surprising quantities, which is converted into sugar. One small trunk, about nine inches in diameter, will yield several quarts of this liquor within the twenty-four hours. When drunk at early dawn, it is very refreshing, and may be taken in any quantity with perfect impunity; but as soon as the sun begins to exert his influence, it immediately ferments, and in a short time becomes exceedingly intoxicating. It is scarcely less strong than proof spirit, and is the more dangerous, because it still retains, under its change of property, its very agreeable flavour. The lower classes in India, who, like the lower classes of most other countries, are fond

of strong stimulants, drink it to excess, and it is so extremely cheap, that for the merest trifle they are able to satisfy their utmost longings. About two-pence will enable a man to reduce himself to a state of the most unenviable unconsciousness, and advantage is taken of this facility of indulgence, to a degree which will be readily conceived by such as have a similar propensity, but never can by such as have not.

Before we reached Ramanadporum, we witnessed a most awful scene, exhibiting the dreadful consequence of this brutal indulgence. At a short distance from the town we discovered the dead body of a man lying upon the road, literally covered with black ants. It presented a shocking spectacle; it was not stiff, and therefore life could not have been long extinct; the nostrils, ears, and eyes, were completely filled with these voracious insects. It was ascertained that the man had become intoxicated by too copious an indulgence in the juice of the toddy-tree, and had laid himself down to sleep by the road side. In this situation, reduced to a state of utter helplessness, he was assailed by the ants, which absolutely destroyed him while he was either asleep or unable to rouse himself. They had literally made their way through his nostrils and ears into the brain. This is by no means an uncommon occurrence. When the skulls of such as have died under similar circumstances have been opened, ants have been found in the different chambers, and portions of the brain have been actually consumed.

We halted at Ramanadporum for one night, where



we found tolerably comfortable quarters under a fine tope of trees, at the outskirts of the town. From hence we proceeded to Ramiseram, situated in the straits between Ceylon and the main land; it is separated from the peninsula by a narrow frith. Ramiseram is a small island about the size of Alderney in the British Channel, low, sandy, and uncultivated. We took up our quarters in a beautiful choultry: I have seen none in India more elaborately and tastefully embellished. It is raised upon a great number of extremely elegant columns richly ornamented, and the stonework is of the finest kind. The building is quadrangular, and of considerable size. The cornices and capitals of the pillars are finished with great care, and the whole subject is one very worthy of the artist's pencil. The building stands upon a rocky foundation extending some distance into the sea; there is a broad terrace round it paved with stone, forming a square; from three sides of this terrace is a descent into the water by a flight of stone steps, for the more convenient performance of those ablutions which are universal among the Hindoos, and certainly the only commendable practice to which superstition has directed them; at least I am acquainted with no other that deserves either to be followed or commended.

The soil of Ramiseram is extremely unproductive, the island being little better than a sandy plain, very low and level. Here are several remarkable tombs, which are said by Mahomedans to be those of Cain, Abel, and their families. On the other side of this little island, there is a celebrated pagoda,

entered by a lofty gateway, upwards of one hundred feet high. The portal, ponderous in the extreme, and composed of a few immense stones, rises to a height of about forty feet. The uncommon massiveness of the work approaches nearer than anything I have seen to the Egyptian style of architecture. This temple is held to be very sacred. Here no water is used for idolatrous purposes but what is brought from the Ganges, which is every morning liberally poured over an uncouth image, looked upon as the presiding deity of the sanctuary, and then sold at an immense price to those who are devout and rich enough to pay for it, which in truth brings no mean revenue to this pagan sanctuary.

Quitting Ramiseram, we proceeded down the coast to Kilcaree, and thence to Veypar. Here we could obtain no water but what was brackish, except by sending to a distance of three miles, which, notwithstanding the respectable number of our retinue, we found to be anything but convenient. The road from Veypar lay through a thick wood, chiefly composed of the umbrella-tree; and here it was that I had an opportunity of observing the strangely fantastic forms which it so frequently exhibits wherever it is found in great abundance. Here indeed I saw some of the most remarkable growths of this capricious member of the forest which I witnessed during the entire period of my residence in India.

We found very little change in the face of the country from Veypar to Panamgoody, which is immediately upon Cape Comorin. The peak of this mountain overlooks a beautiful and extensive tract

of country on one side, and the mighty waste of waters on the other. The ascent towards the summit is so precipitous, that no one has ever succeeded in surmounting it. On the eastern side the land is flat and in a state of tolerably good cultivation, while on the western it is mountainous and almost covered with jungle. The cape is frequently surrounded by a broad belt of clouds towards the top, and rises above this delicate drapery with a bold sharp outline, looking as if it were poised in mid-air by some invisible agency, its grand cone towering in quiet relief against a brilliant sky, and realizing the sublime description of the poet:—

> "As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form
> Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm,
> Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
> Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

At a short distance from the bottom of the hill is a choultry, much less ornamented than they usually are, and so small as scarcely to alter the generally sombre features of the landscape, which is here one of quiet solemnity; nay, though the neighbourhood is tolerably populous, considering that it is so remote from the larger towns, yet in the immediate vicinity of the mountain there is an appearance of solitariness that tends rather to fill the mind with images of tigers and other beasts of prey, which are continually prowling in all solitary places in this part of the peninsula, where they abound, than with the gentler recollections of social life and of sweet communion with our fellow-men. From the extreme

elevation of the cape above the plain, as well as from its magnitude, all objects immediately below it shrink into comparative diminutiveness; the trees no longer seem to maintain their stately proportions, and every thing is alike affected by the mighty contrast.

It is a remarkable coincidence, that the highest part of this celebrated promontory is within a few feet the same as the Table Land at the Cape of Good Hope, the one being the most southern point of the Indian peninsula, the other the southern extremity of the African continent. The highest point of the promontory is some miles from the sea, the land gradually subsiding until it runs in a low headland into the ocean. The chatta-tree is here so plentiful, that we frequently made use of it as a standing umbrella. The upper growth of the tree, which forms the canopy, is so thorny, that the branches at times appear to be completely serrated, while the prickles are so large and the branches so closely locked together as to form a covering quite impervious to the rays of the sun. In getting under any of these trees, we invariably found the whole surface of the ground, as far as the branches extended, covered with thorns, so that, before we could seat ourselves, it was always necessary to sweep the space well, and even as we sat we were frequently exposed to a prickly shower upon the slightest agitation of the tree from the wind. The taur, or toddy-tree, familiarly known in India by the name of the fan-leafed palm, is a constant companion of the chatta, as both thrive best in a sandy soil, which is generally found near the coast.

The scenery from Cape Comorin through the Tine-



velly and Dindigul districts, is superior perhaps to any on the Indian peninsula, independently of the beautifully varied forms of the mountains, which are almost covered with wood of the most stupendous growth. The smaller hills which skirt the plain are here and there graced with some exquisite specimens of art in the shape of temples, and choultries are here just as numerous as they are higher up the coast. Throughout this neighbourhood Nature exhibits herself on a vast scale. Elephants abound in the mighty forests, where trees of immense bulk rise from their dark recesses to the extraordinary height of from a hundred and fifty to two hundred feet, nearly three times the stature of the English oak. They are stately and grand beyond conception.

We passed a group of wild elephants under these " mighty giants of the shade," and these huge animals were diminished in appearance almost to the size of bullocks. Compared with the towering marvels of the forest under which they stood, they appeared so reduced, that the hugeness of their stature seemed quite a matter of doubt; though the frequent crash of large branches, violently torn from the parent trunks, sufficiently proclaimed their power, and somewhat neutralized the illusion. The elephant, in its wild state, is exceedingly timid. It is so much afraid of man, that it always retires whenever he approaches it, and nothing but some very extraordinary provocation would induce it to make an attack. Even when in herds, however large, elephants always avoid too close a proximity to man, as if aware of his moral superiority.

When we quitted Panamgoody, we retreated from the sea, directing our course in a straight line to Palamcotta. From this latter town, after a day's halt, we proceeded to Tinevelly. Here, though the country is extremely well wooded, there are extensive patches, highly cultivated, and eminently picturesque. The champaign is bounded by a range of mountains, which, when the sun sinks behind them, fling their huge shadows over an extensive district at once populous and fruitful. Before we left Tinevelly, we took the opportunity of visiting the waterfall at Puppanassum, which is, perhaps, upon the whole, the most stupendous object of its kind in the Carnatic. The approach to it lay through a long narrow valley, at the termination of which the fall deposits its waters in an unfathomable pool, whence a new river seems to issue, winding its placid course through a plain nearly level with the sea. Upon our approach to the fall through this valley, confined on either side by lofty hills, the view of it was frequently obstructed by the intersections of the mountain round which we occasionally had to wind. We followed the tortuous course of the stream, along the banks of which we saw a great number of devotees on their way to bathe in those sacred waters, and to offer their genuflexions and prostrations upon a spot, consecrated at once by extreme antiquity and very awful local traditions. These slaves of the most besotted superstitions upon earth did not appear to be at all pleased at the idea of seeing the place profaned by the unhallowed feet of faringees or Christians, whom they hold in absolute abhorrence. They passed us in dogged silence, and



there was an expression of malignant scorn upon the curl of those lips which were about to offer up their devotions to gods more abominable than themselves, that satisfied us they wanted not the will, though they lacked the daring, to do us a mischief. Alas! that devotion should have such votaries! No one who has witnessed the stern ferocity of feeling encouraged by the deluded supporters of a most extravagant idolatry, towards all of a different creed, can well shut out the reflection of his own moral advantages, and fail to bless his God, with most earnest sincerity of purpose, that he was born a member of a Christian community.

Upon turning the angle of a hill, which rose abruptly from the valley, the fall burst suddenly upon our sight. It was indeed a magnificent spectacle. The impression excited was so uncommon, that I was obliged to close my eyes for a moment, in order to recover from the sudden and almost astounding surprise. Though the roar of the cataract had been long heard before we reached it, so that we were not unprepared for something more than commonly imposing, the reality far transcended our expectations. It is precipitated from a height of one hundred and fifty feet, pouring over the steep a prodigious body of water, which, forcing its way betwixt intervening rocks, among which it boils and hisses with tremendous energy, falls into the deep, dark pool beneath with a din and turbulence that are almost deafening. The sound of the cataract may be heard at the distance of several miles, even in the dry season; but, during the monsoons, when swelled by

mountain torrents, the roar is augmented tenfold. There is a tremendous vortex just below the fall, caused by its sudden and violent pressure upon the surface below, so that no one can safely approach within reach of the spray. The waters of this spot are highly sacred, Puppanassum, the name which the place bears, signifying the washing away of sins. A great number of devotees are to be seen at all times bathing in this consecrated river.

About a mile from the cataract a handsome pagoda is built upon the banks of the stream, together with several elegant choultries. Here river fish of various kinds may be caught, and tame carp nearly two feet long come to the surface to be fed, which they daily are by the superstitious Hindoos. "This is altogether one of the wildest and most beautiful spots," says Colonel Welsh, "I have ever seen, and the neighbourhood abounds with game, particularly with peafowl, tigers, and wild hogs. This place may be visited safely only between the months of May and September; at all other times a dangerous hill-fever is extremely prevalent." This, however, the whole of our party were fortunate enough to escape.

By the side of this celebrated fall there is a rock which is most highly venerated. It is covered with a rude bas-relief, before which pilgrims and other visitants to these holy waters prostrate themselves, performing at the same time the most grotesque gesticulations that can be imagined. Fakeers are also to be found—and where are they not in India?—among the swarms of fanatics who daily practise their fantastic ceremonials before these mystical sculptures.

Here we were somewhat amused at the sight of a sleek long-bearded Hindoo, called a Purrum-Hungse, from a supposed sanctity and presumed austerity of life, neither of which is ever realized by these sanctified hypocrites. The Purrum-Hungse is supposed to have descended from heaven, to live entirely without food, the chameleon of the human species, and to survive under the earth or under the water to the age of a thousand years. The man was seated at some little distance from the sacred rock, with his back supported against the trunk of a tree, and his fat shapeless legs thrust out in a direct line with the horizon, as if he were calculating the degrees of an angle formed by the inflection of his own pampered body. His eyes were fixed on vacancy, evidently to convey an idea of the devout abstraction of his mind. He would have appeared rapt, but for a certain astute obliquity of expression, which put the seal of hypocrisy upon him so indelibly, that no one but a blind idolater could mistake it. He was as plain to be read as the alphabet in capital letters. His beard was long and grizzled, but just enough so to mark a vigorous maturity; while his whole outward man was so sleek, as to defy the imputation of his being saint enough to starve his body for the benefit of his soul. He had evidently adopted the wiser philosophy, that as a man must live to be good, so he must eat to live. It is, after all, truly surprising with what unreserved credulity the monstrous absurdities affected by these impostors are believed by the besotted Hindoos.

CHAPTER VI.

FALL OF GUNGAVAPETTAH.—WILD ELEPHANTS.

UPON leaving Puppanassum, we proceeded to the northward, and halted at a small town about fifteen miles on the road towards Dindigul, where there are some falls which we were anxious to see. As we approached the chief object of our curiosity, the jungle through which we had to pass became extremely difficult to traverse, the vegetation being so luxuriant that at times we could scarcely penetrate it. It was moreover so infested with tigers and wild elephants, that we considered it prudent to obtain a guard of sepoys from the British resident, who was kind enough to add to our escort a number of peons, armed with long spears. Though we had considerable confidence under so strong a convoy, we nevertheless could not but occasionally feel a few disquieting apprehensions as we every now and then heard the distant yell of the tiger, or the crackling of the bushes under the heavy tramp of the elephants, which invariably retreated upon our approach. For the last three miles before we reached the cataracts, the jungle was so thick that we were frequently obliged to get out of our palankeens and make our way through it, forcing back the matted undergrowth with our hands,

or following our more alert guides the peons, who made the passage clear before us with their tulwars and spears.

Before we entered the last deep recess of the wood, we crossed several fields where it was evident that sugar-canes had lately grown, but which, on the evening preceding, as we afterwards ascertained, had been entirely destroyed by the wild elephants. These animals frequently commit the most frightful depredations upon the cultivated spots that skirt the forests. They prostrate every thing before them, so that a whole field of sugar-cane is often entirely laid waste by them in the course of a few hours. A man and his wife, who had been stationed in a hut to look after the plantation through which we passed, and to frighten off any of the forest ravagers that might appear to carry on their work of destruction, had been compelled to mount upon the upper branches of a large tree as the only place of security; for their enemies were not only many, but terrible also in their might and energy. Here the watchers remained all the time that the work of devastation was going on, which they distinctly saw, for there was a clear moonlight, without the slightest power of interrupting it. As soon as the plantation had been entirely laid waste, the elephants retired, when the terrified couple, who had been so long lodged in the branches of a teak-tree, descended from their painful elevation to communicate the unwelcome intelligence to the landed proprietor.

This herd of quadruped giants was only at a short distance from us as we were making our way through

the jungle. We distinctly heard them forcing a path for their unwieldy bodies, and tearing down the large branches of trees that interrupted their progress. They seemed to be conscious of our vicinity, for they never came in sight of us, though we could continually hear that they were almost close at hand. We had, however, very little apprehension about them, as they are known never to attack except when molested. It is, in truth, a wise ordination of Providence that animals are generally mild in their character, and gentle in their habits, in proportion to their bulk. How admirably is this merciful distribution of nature adapted to the condition of things since the fall of man in Paradise! If the elephant were ferocious in proportion to his might, every country in which he could find a refuge would soon become a scene of utter devastation. If the tiger had the elephant's amazing bulk and prodigious strength, combined with the lion's courage and his own peculiar fierceness, what would become of the population of those countries where he now prowls in search of baser prey than man, only because he fears the highest order of God's creatures upon earth, and is by nature as cowardly as he is ravenous? The crocodile, indeed, and the shark, are ferocious in proportion to their size and strength, but their sphere of action is circumscribed; so that man, under any circumstances, could have comparatively little to apprehend from those tremendous powers of destruction with which they are gifted.

Our only fear during our journey to these falls was of the tiger, whose footmarks we could frequently trace in the more open passages of the jungle. At



length we emerged upon a large vista of the wood, which was intersected by a piece of water of considerable extent. On the further side were several wild elephants, and among them two females with each a young one. As if conscious of the natural impediment to our near approach, they remained as perfectly indifferent as if they did not observe us. The males accompanied the females, as their natural protectors, and there appeared to be as perfect an understanding among them, as if their social habits were regulated by those moral restraints which laws were established to maintain among human communities. The female elephant has a remarkable peculiarity of conformation, common, I believe, to no other class of mammalia. The mammæ or paps, instead of being situated where they are in all other gregarious, or at least in all ruminating and graminivorous animals, are placed just behind the fore-legs, and nothing can be conceived more amusing than the movements of the young one when drawing its natural sustenance from the huge mother. The elephant is in every respect a very extraordinary animal.

Before we reached the cataracts we saw additional evidences of the havoc so frequently caused by these formidable creatures, who sometimes make a very destructive use of their liberty. For the last mile and a half we were obliged to follow the course of the nullah, in order to accomplish the object of our somewhat adventurous journey, the jungle being here so thick that we found it utterly impossible to penetrate it; and at length we had much arduous clambering over vast fragments of rock, which had been rent by

various convulsions from their parent masses, before we could attain the foot of the fall. At last it suddenly opened upon us, but though much higher than Puppanassum, it was greatly inferior to it in sublimity. Although nearly twice as high, it was so much narrower as to appear by comparison but a mere cascade. It is named Gungavapetta.

In this neighbourhood the artocarpus, or bread-fruit tree, is very abundant, and grows to an enormous size. The fruit of this tree hangs on the boughs like apples. It undergoes the process of baking before it is eaten. Captain Cook observes, that among the natives of Otaheite and the neighbouring islands, where it grows in prodigious quantities, "it not only serves as a substitute for bread, but also, variously dressed, composes the principal part of their food. It grows upon a tree about the size of a middling oak, the leaves of which are frequently a foot and a half long, of an oblong shape, deeply situated like those of the fig-tree, which they very much resemble in colour and consistence, and in exuding a milky juice upon being broken. The fruit is about the size and shape of a new-born child's head, and the surface is reticulated not much unlike a truffle: it is covered with a thin skin, and has a core about as big as the handle of a small knife. The eatable part lies between the skin and the core. It is as white as snow, and somewhat of the consistence of new bread. It must be roasted before it is eaten, being first divided into three or four parts. Its taste is insipid, with a slight sweetness, somewhat resembling that of the crumb of wheaten bread mixed with a Jerusalem artichoke."

Before we left Dindigul, a circumstance occurred to an English officer commanding a small out-station in this district, which may be considered not undeserving of record. He was early one morning taking his customary ramble, before the sun had attained a sufficient elevation in the heavens to drink up the freshness of the dews which glittered around, when, upon passing a small ruined building, his attention was suddenly arrested by the appearance of something with which his eye did not seem to be at all familiar, moving in a deep recess of the ruin. He approached it cautiously, fearing, as he could not distinguish the object very clearly, that it might be a tiger, or some other animal equally dangerous. Upon closer inspection, he discovered it to be an immense snake, filling with its voluminous folds the whole recess. Determined at once upon its destruction, but knowing that he could do nothing single-handed against a creature at once so active and so powerful, he made the best of his way to the guard-house, and ordered half a dozen soldiers to the spot, armed with their muskets, and having the bayonets fixed. They were six strong, determined Englishmen. They made no objection to encounter so unusual an enemy; on the contrary, they were pleased at the thought of the sport, and, being formed in line, advanced steadily to the attack as soon as the word of command was given, and simultaneously transfixed the monster with their bayonets, firmly pinning it against the wall. Being so roughly disturbed from its slumbers, the enormous creature uncoiled itself in a few seconds, and such was its prodigious strength that, with one

mighty sweep of its tail, it dashed five of its assailants to the earth. The sixth, who was near its head, maintained his position, and still kept his terrific adversary against the wall, adroitly avoiding the lashings of its ponderous tail, by stooping or dodging as circumstances required, until the animal, exhausted with pain and exertion, lay extended at full length upon the earth, almost motionless. By this time the five soldiers who had been struck down, having recovered their feet, wounded the vanquished snake with the butt-end of their muskets upon the extremity of the tail, where the inosculation of the vertebræ is less firm, thus disabling it so completely, that it was soon dispatched. It measured upwards of fifty feet in length, and was full three in circumference.

As I have been led, in the course of this chapter, to speak of elephants in their state of natural freedom, I shall conclude it with an anecdote which at once exhibits their remarkable docility, sagacity, and self-denial, in a state of subjection to human domination. Before we left Madras, my fellow-travellers and I were witnesses of the following singular circumstance.

A mahoot,* wishing to go to the bazaar to purchase something for domestic consumption, and unwilling to be encumbered with his infant child, which had lost its mother, delivered it into the custody of the elephant

* A person who drives the elephant; he always sits on the neck, and generally urges the animal forward by words of endearment, but when it is refractory goads it with a short iron spike.

of which he had the charge, at the same time giving her (for it was a female) a verbal caution, which she seemed perfectly to comprehend, to be vigilant in the discharge of her trust; he then quitted the spot on which the elephant was picketed, leaving the infant on the ground before her. Some English officers, hearing the caution that had been given, and doubting the integrity of the creature, with whose character, as it appeared in the sequel, they were but indifferently acquainted, determined to try if it was not possible to seduce her from her trust; they concluded of course that, as is the case with all brutes, whether quadruped or biped—for they are sometimes to be found among the latter race of animals—selfishness was a predominating trait of her nature, and that therefore every other object would be held secondary to her own gratification. Under this impression, they began by tempting her appetite, and the appetite of an elephant is in general tolerably keen, with such fruits as they knew she was likely to be most fond of, not doubting for a moment that she would instantly resign the guardianship of the child for an employment so much more to her satisfaction. But no; she eyed the fruit with an oblique though approving glance, at the same time not attempting to stir, keeping her head just over the child, from which her eye was not for an instant diverted. Some of the tempters, provided with long bamboos, having a noose at the end, endeavoured to draw the little object of the creature's solicitude from the position in which the parent had placed it. At this the elephant evinced considerable displeasure, disdaining to cast a

single further glance at the fruit, as if her pride was hurt at the base suspicions of her tormentors, but turned towards them a look which bespoke her firm resolve at once to resent any attempts to withdraw her from her duty, and to vindicate her own integrity. They tried every possible method to effect their purpose in vain; the vigilant guardian was as incorruptible as she was immoveable, standing over her unconscious charge, and frowning fierce defiance upon those who had so unjustly wronged the nobleness of her nature by a degrading suspicion. They understood her angry rebuke, and retreated. The mahoot at length returned, when the noble animal took the infant in her trunk, and placing it gently in the father's arms, with a flourish of her proboscis, which indicated a consciousness that she had faithfully performed her painful duty, turned towards the officers, and directing upon them a look of complacent forgiveness, received the fruit from their hands with the most evident tokens of gratification, and seemed perfectly well satisfied, not only that she had diligently discharged her trust, but that the object of that trust was no longer a bar to her indulgence in the offered luxuries.

This same elephant made her escape not long after, and the mahoot was discharged for his carelessness. Every search was made in vain; she could nowhere be found. Full two years had elapsed, as I have since heard, when, during an elephant-hunt in the forests of Dindigul, the quondam keeper, making one of the party, recognized the runaway in a herd, with a young one by her side. He went fearlessly up to her, addressing her in his customary words of endear-

ment, fondled the young one, and, without any difficulty or resistance on the part of the mother, resumed his former seat upon her neck, when she suffered herself with her little one to be re-conducted to the quarters of her old master. She was nothing the worse for the two years' liberty which she had enjoyed, but continued perfectly submissive, and ultimately proved a most valuable animal.

CHAPTER VII.

COLUMBO.—TALIPAT TREE.—QUEEN OF CANDY.

QUITTING Dindigul, we crossed the country to Ramiseram, with the intention of paying a short visit to Ceylon, and then of proceeding by water to Calcutta. The island of Ramiseram is connected with the continent, and also with the larger island of Ceylon by a ridge of rocks which is broken in two or three places, thus affording a passage to the water on either side. This ridge, on the side of the peninsula, is called Adam's bridge; but the larger opening between the two islands has received the less primitive appellation of Saint Andrew's Passage, and is about thirty miles across, while that between Ramiseram and the continent is a very narrow strait, especially at low water. We were carried over to Ceylon in a light sailing-boat in a few hours.

The morning after our landing we made the best of our way to Columbo, though our spirit of adventure was somewhat checked by a circumstance which occurred on the very day after our arrival at this town. An English lady had sent a messenger a few miles into the interior with a letter, but, as he did not return at the time expected, she began to apprehend that some accident had befallen him; she consequently

sent a party in quest of the man, but they could obtain no tidings of him. At length in crossing a stream, on their return from an unsuccessful search, they saw a dead alligator upon the bank with its jaws extended as if it had suffered a violent death. Upon examining the creature more closely, they found that it had been choked, as the throat was considerably distended. This they immediately proceeded to cut open, in order to ascertain the cause of a strangulation so very unusual, when the head of the unfortunate messenger was found completely choking up the passage. The animal had been evidently unable to pass it, and had in consequence died of suffocation. The turban was still on the man's head, and, upon taking off the skull-cap, the answer to the lady's letter was found under it perfectly uninjured. It was presumed that the poor fellow had attempted to swim across the stream, having first deposited the letter under his turban, but was arrested and destroyed by the alligator before he could reach the opposite shore.

A day or two after our arrival at Columbo we started upon a visit to the interior, and on the banks of the Calamy river had the gratifying opportunity of seeing a talipât palm in blossom, which is by no means a thing of common occurrence. The scene in which we witnessed this remarkable effort of nature was very novel and imposing. It opened upon a confined valley, through which the river winds its irregular way, and upon whose transparent bosom were several boats, pursuing their quiet course to the rough but not discordant song of the Cingalese mariner.

These boats are long and narrow, so much so as to require outriggers in order to prevent their upsetting. These outriggers are long pieces of wood, pointed both at the head and stern, and attached to the boat at right angles by bamboos, thus staying her fore and aft. This simple contrivance is applied to one side only. Our attention was also particularly arrested by several rafts on this river, over each of which a complete canopy was thrown, formed by a single leaf of the talipât tree, that entirely covered both the freight and the crew.

This extraordinary tree, certainly among the most singular productions of the vegetable kingdom, grows sometimes to the height of two hundred feet. It blossoms only once during its existence, then dies, and in dying, like the fabled Phœnix, sheds the seeds of a future generation around it. The flower, which bursts forth with a loud explosion,* is occasionally thirty feet long. The following is the account published under the sanction of Sir Alexander Johnstone, accompanied by a very wretched print made from a most beautiful drawing by Mr. Samuel Daniell.†

"The talipât, or rather palm, is a native of Ceylon,

* Mr. John Whitchurch Bennett, author of a curious and valuable work on the Fishes of Ceylon, during a residence of some years on that island, was several times present when these explosions took place. He brought home a leaf of the talipât-tree thirty-six feet in circumference.

† The name of Mr. William Daniell appears to this print without his sanction, and this is the more to be regretted as it is a most feeble representation of a very beautiful drawing made from nature, not by him, but by his brother, an artist of extraordinary promise, who early fell a victim to the noxious climate of Ceylon.



where it occurs among the mountains in the interior. It also grows in the Burnan empire, and other parts of the East Indies. The leaves are eighteen feet or more in diameter: they are of a coriaceous texture when dried, capable of being folded and again opened repeatedly like a fan. They readily receive an impression from any hard point. Advantage is taken of this property to use strips of them, prepared in milk, instead of paper, to write upon; which is one of the most important uses of this palm. Their ribs are of the texture of cane, which adds greatly to their strength. When cut at the extremities of the petioles, they are said to be used to protect the heads of travellers and fighting men who have to force their way through the jungle. For this purpose only a portion of the leaf is used; the thicker part which was attached to the petiole is placed forward, and the sides hanging over the ears, a kind of wedge or inverted keel is formed which forces the branches aside as the wearer pushes forward.

" All the books of importance in Pali or Cingalese in Ceylon, relative to the religion of Buddhoo, are written upon laminæ of these leaves. The Pali and Cingalese character is engraved upon strips of them, with either a brass or an iron style. There are some of these books in Sir A. Johnstone's collection, which are supposed to be between five and six hundred years old, and which are still very perfect. Two fine specimens of books written upon the leaves, now in the library of the ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY, are invaluable. The one is a complete copy of the Pali book, called the Pansyapanas Jatakaya, written upon

eleven hundred and seventy-two laminæ of the finest description. This book contains the whole moral and religious code of the Buddhists, and is so scarce, that it was for some time believed there was no complete copy extant. Sir A. Johnstone, when President of his Majesty's Council in Ceylon, being, from the various benefits which he had conferred upon the priests of Buddhoo, much in their confidence, was allowed by them to have copies taken of all the different parts which were dispersed among the most celebrated temples in the island, and of them formed a complete book.

"The other is a very fine specimen of a Burmese volume on the Buddhoo religion, written upon laminæ of the talipât leaf, lacquered over and beautifully gilt, which was sent to the President by the King of Ava, with some other books, as the finest specimen he could give him of the manner in which the books in the royal library at Ava were written. The talipât leaf is used in the maritime provinces of Ceylon as a mark of distinction, each person being allowed to have a number of these leaves, folded up as a fan, carried with him by his servant. It is also used in the Candian country in the shape of a round flat umbrella upon a stick. It is further used to make tents, and by the common people to shelter them from the rain, one leaf affording sufficient shelter for seven or eight persons. When about eighty years old, which is when it has attained its full growth, the flower-spike bursts from its envelope with a loud report: it is then as white as ivory. In the course of fifteen or twenty months it showers down its abundance of

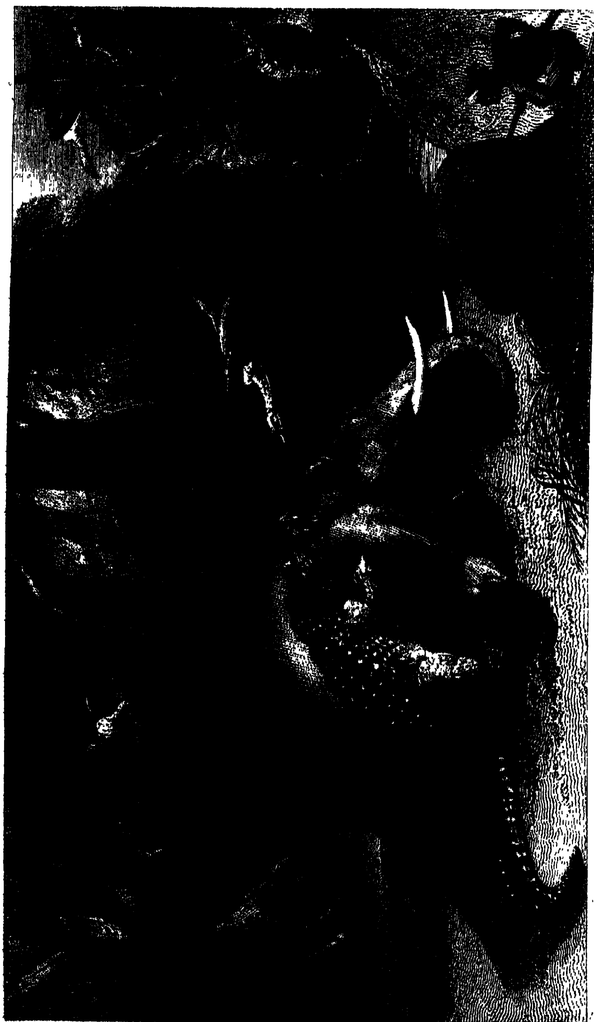
nuts. This effort to provide a numerous succession proves fatal to the parent. In times of great scarcity the natives of India cut down this palm, and extract the pith for food: it very much resembles sago in its qualities."

To this account of the tree, a few particulars may be added. The one which we saw was not above a hundred feet high, and measured nearly seven feet round the trunk; but they are sometimes much larger, growing occasionally to a circumference of nine or ten feet. The fruit of the tree is about the size of a twenty-four pound cannon-ball, and contains a thick pulp, having seeds like the palmyra. "This tree," says Knox, "is as big and tall as a ship's mast," (a very vague standard either of size or height,) "and very straight, bearing only leaves, which are of great use and benefit to the inhabitants of Ceylon; one single leaf being so broad and large that it will cover fifteen or twenty men, and keep them dry when it rains. The leaf being dried, is very strong and limber, and most wonderfully made for men's convenience to carry along with them; for though it be thus broad when open, yet it folds close, like a lady's fan, and then is no bigger than a man's arm, and extremely light." In this account, though the size of the leaf differs from that given with the print published by Sir A. Johnstone, yet it is by no means exaggerated. A leaf of this palm which we saw, completely covered fourteen men, and it was one of ordinary dimensions.

We now proceeded towards the interior, but found the aspect of the country in every respect uninvit-

ing; it was low, swampy, and covered with thick jungle. On the tenth day after our quitting Columbo, a large dog, belonging to a Cingalese who accompanied us, was bitten by a snake, the ticpolonga. This is, I believe, the most venomous of the reptile tribe, not even excepting the rattle-snake. The dog appeared to suffer great agony, and died in convulsions in about twenty minutes. It has been erroneously imagined that Ceylon is infested with venomous snakes; this, however, is not the fact, as only four species of the venomous kind are found here, and these by no means abound.

On the morning after the death of the poor dog, which was a fine animal and much regretted by us all, we were unexpectedly entertained by a scene of the most novel and imposing character. We had taken our guns and sauntered into the jungle, accompanied by several armed natives, in order to try if we could not furnish our table with some of the excellent wild fowl with which the woods and marshes abound. We had not proceeded far before we entered a large open space in the forest, in the centre of which was a sheet of water of considerable extent, filled, as we could perceive, with alligators of enormous size. This lake, although penetrating far into the jungle, was rather narrow, but extremely deep. From its banks, on either side, a great number of large forest-trees, which were distinctly reflected in its dark and placid bosom, cast their broad shadows upon its waters; whilst the sun, darting his vivid rays through the close foliage that nearly intercepted them, threw here and there small masses of golden light,



which gave a solemn but relieved interest to the natural gloom of the picture. Near the head of the lake was the carcass of a dead elephant, upon which a large alligator was making his meal, while others of less magnitude were eagerly awaiting his departure that they might succeed him, when he should have received his sufficiency, and likewise enjoy the luxury of a feast. The natural solitariness and asperity of the spot, the immobility and murkiness of the lake, the extreme denseness of the foliage, together with the almost cavernous gloom which such a concurrence of causes produced, were seen in awful contrast with the several varieties of living objects that met the sight upon entering this sequestered glade. There was indeed a stirring activity in the very haunt of solitude; and what is strange, the feeling of intense solitariness was only the more strongly awakened by the presence of this activity, as the mind instantly felt that it could only be witnessed far from the abodes of men. The mental associations excited by the scene before us were any thing but pleasing, as we here read in one of Nature's most melancholy pages the sad lesson of animal selfishness and ferocity. How does the former run through all the countless gradations of human feeling! In the rational creature it is the master-spring of motives, intents, and actions, and exists as strongly as in the irrational; in the latter, it is only the more obvious, because it is the less disguised. These reflections passed rapidly through my thoughts as I gazed upon the living things which swarmed in and about the dark lake on whose banks the elephant had breathed his last.

Various beasts and birds of prey,—jackals, adjutants, vultures, kites, and reptiles of different kinds, were seen collecting from all quarters, waiting their turn to share in the casualty of a full banquet.

During the time that the large alligator,

"At once the king and savage of the waste,"

was busy at his work of hungry devastation on the colossal body of the elephant, a native attendant was desired to advance and fire, in order that we might see what would be the effect of the explosion among the ravenous visiters to this gloomy valley. This he immediately did. The ball glanced from the alligator's body as if it had been cased in adamant, when a scene of confusion ensued which defies description. The whole valley seemed at once to start into life. The rush of the monster thus suddenly scared from its prey—the splashings of those which were floating on the surface of the lake in expectation of a speedy meal, as they plunged beneath its still waters—the yelling of the jackals, and the screaming of the vultures, made altogether such a din that we were glad to escape from the frightful uproar. We had the curiosity to revisit the spot after our day's sport, on our return to our tents, when we found the large body of the elephant entirely consumed, with nothing but the skeleton remaining. The bones were picked as clean as if they had been under the hands of a most skilful surgeon, and prepared by him for some national museum. This operation was completed by the black ants, which swarm upon a carcass after it has been relinquished

by the more voracious beasts of prey, and leave the fleshless frame as white and clean as if it had been polished by the efforts of human ingenuity.

As we advanced into the kingdom of Candy, the aspect of the country became more mountainous, but it was still covered with thick and impenetrable jungle, which is frequently infested by a set of savages in the human form, almost as brutalized as the beasts of the forest. They scarcely seem to rise higher in the scale of intellect than to the instincts of the baboon. These are the Bedahs, or Vedahs, a race of people, not numerous indeed, as they are said to be not many thousands in number, eagerly shunning the sight of civilized man, but brutally ferocious when encountered; they inhabit the distant recesses of the woods. They are probably the true aborigines, though they are so completely barbarized, that they can give no probable account of their own origin, which has never yet been traced, and is even a matter of speculation among the more enlightened Cingalese. These Bedahs shun all intercourse except with the members of their own savage tribe; it is therefore a circumstance of rare occurrence to come in contact with one of them, and when any have been taken by the British soldiers, which has sometimes happened, they have turned out to be either so invincibly stubborn or so stupid that nothing could be elicited from them. They speak a dialect of the Cingalese language, and have a form of religion, but it is idolatrous, silly, and superstitious, in the highest degree. These barbarians are to be found more or less in all parts of the island which are remote from human habitations;

they, however, chiefly occupy those regions which are most mountainous, consequently of least practicable access, and little known to Europeans. There was, at the period of our visit, a considerable number of them in the kingdom of Candy to the north-east, and these were by far the most savage of their tribe. Their only means of subsistence is by hunting, in which they are very expert, exhibiting extraordinary dexterity in catching deer and other wild animals, with which their forests abound. Their adroitness and activity in this pursuit, their principal, nay, their only pastime, being indeed at once a pastime and a necessity, is truly amazing. When unsuccessful in the chase, they satisfy the cravings of nature with the fruits which grow spontaneously around them. A few of the less savage occasionally traffic with the Candians, exchanging ivory, honey, and wax, for cloth, iron, knives, &c.; but the Rambah Bedahs, who are the most indomitable among them, are more seldom seen than even the wildest animals. They sleep under trees, and, when alarmed, climb them with the fearlessness and activity of wild cats.

We soon grew heartily disgusted with the interior, and having paid a visit to the palace of the Candian king, which for a royal residence was but a very ordinary edifice, we resolved to make the best of our way back to Columbo. Whilst we remained in the neighbourhood of his Candian majesty's residence, Mr. William Daniell was permitted to make a portrait of the queen, from which the accompanying engraving is taken; it may be relied upon as a most admirable likeness. She was very young, extremely pretty, of

engaging manners, familiar without being free, and appeared much delighted at seeing her features transferred to paper. Her dress was becoming, her figure graceful, and her gait elegant.

Before we quitted this neighbourhood, which at particular times of the year is very unhealthy, we had the sad opportunity of seeing several unfortunate wretches who were afflicted with elephantiasis, which is truly a most horrible disease. The whole body is sometimes incrusted with large cutaneous tubercles, which give it the revolting appearance of being covered with a squalid elephant's hide. In some instances the joints of the fingers and toes drop off, while the leg occasionally grows to such a prodigious size that the afflicted sufferer can scarcely drag it after him, looking more like the trunk of a dark rough-coated tree than a leg. It is impossible to conceive any thing more frightful than this visitation, to which the natives of Ceylon are particularly liable.

It happened, on our return through some of the swamps which occasionally surround the bases of the hills, that several of our retinue were attacked by that dreadful plague of all travellers on this island, the Ceylon leech. It is a positive pest. Though very different from that used for medicinal purposes in Europe, it draws the blood much in a similar way but far more profusely, producing great pain. It is exceedingly small, averaging, in its ordinary state, from a quarter to the third of an inch in length, and almost transparent, so that the internal structure is plainly to be traced through a powerful magnifying glass. It is an uncommonly active little animal, and

its powers of extension are so great, that, when drawn out to its extreme length, it resembles a light fine cord. The point which it inserts into the pores of the skin is so sharp that it readily penetrates the minutest orifices, and when once securely fixed, it is both difficult and painful to get the creature off. Where they abound, it is impossible to escape them, except by covering the body from head to foot with linen closely woven, and without any openings, or, if there be any, by having them so carefully closed as to prevent the possibility of the leeches finding ingress. Their bite is very troublesome, being apt to fester, and to terminate in an ulcerous sore. Not unfrequently, where the habit of body happens to be bad, they produce large ulcers, which, in many cases, have caused the loss of the limb, and in some the loss of life. The wound inflicted by these leeches produces at first a sharp pain, which is succeeded by the most intolerable itching; and, if any part of the body is exposed, the moment you destroy one of your tormentors another is sure to succeed. They draw an amazing quantity of blood in a very short time, which of course in so warm a climate soon produces considerable prostration of strength. This torment of the traveller in Ceylon is highly disgusting to look at, not so much, however, from its positive ugliness, as from the painful associations which the sight of it immediately challenges.

An idea has prevailed, probably from Mr. Lewis's popular tale on the subject, that the boa constrictor is a native of Ceylon. This is quite a mistake, as it is nowhere found on the island; there is however a large snake called the pimberah, which is not uncom-

mon here. "The body of this creature," says Knox, "is as big as a man's middle, and the length proportionable. It is not swift, but by subtilty catches its prey. He lies in the path where the deer use to pass, and as they go, he claps hold of them by a kind of peg that grows on his tail, with which he strikes them. He will swallow a roebuck whole, horns and all, so that it happens sometimes the horns run through his belly, and kill him. A stag was caught by one of these pimberahs, which seized him by the buttock, and held him so fast that he could not get away, but ran a few steps this way and that way. An Indian seeing the stag run thus, supposed him in a snare, and having a gun, shot him; at which he gave so strong a jerk, that it pulled the serpent's head off, while his tail was encompassing a tree to hold the stag the better."*

In this account, the size of the animal, I should say, is somewhat exaggerated, as I believe the length seldom or never exceeds thirty feet, and the body ten inches in diameter, which however is not much below the size of the body of a small man. The boa constrictor is much larger, and has been known to reach the extraordinary length of from eighty to one hundred feet, with a proportionate circumference.

Our stay at Ceylon was very short, as we were anxious to proceed up that queen of streams the Ganges, in order that we might explore the country through which it passes, so rich in monuments of

* In Cordiner's History of Ceylon, this anecdote is quoted from Knox, who, though an inelegant writer, is allowed to have been an authentic historian.

ancient and modern art. Before we quitted Ceylon, however, we visited the Fort de Galle, one of the most interesting objects on the island. It is of considerable extent, with several excellent and substantial buildings, and many wealthy residents. During our stay in this neighbourhood, a circumstance occurred within a few miles of the fort, which, I trust, will not be considered out of place in these pages.

A small body of sepoys stationed at an outpost to protect a granary, containing a large quantity of rice, was suddenly removed, in order to quiet some unruly villagers, a few miles distant, who had set the authorities at defiance. Two of our party happened to be on the spot at the moment. No sooner had the sepoys withdrawn, than a herd of wild elephants, which had been long noticed in the neighbourhood, made their appearance in front of the granary. They had been preceded by a scout, which returned to the herd, and, having no doubt satisfied them, in a language which to them needed no interpreter, that the coast was clear, they advanced at a brisk pace towards the building. When they arrived within a few yards of it, quite in martial order, they made a sudden stand, and began deliberately to reconnoitre the object of their attack. Nothing could be more wary and methodical than their proceedings. The walls of the granary were of solid brickwork, very thick, and the only opening into the building was in the centre of the terraced roof, to which the ascent was by a ladder. On the approach of the elephants, the two astonished spectators clambered up into a lofty banyan tree, in order to escape mischief. The conduct of the four-

footed besiegers was such as strongly to excite their curiosity, and they therefore watched their proceedings with intense anxiety. The two spectators were so completely screened by the foliage of the tree to which they had resorted for safety, that they could not be perceived by the elephants, though they could see very well, through the little vistas formed by the separated branches, what was going on below. Had there been a door to the granary, all difficulty of obtaining an entrance would have instantly vanished, but four thick brick walls were obstacles which seemed at once to defy both the strength and sagacity of these dumb robbers. Nothing daunted by the magnitude of the difficulty which they had to surmount, they successively began their operations at the angles of the building. A large male elephant with tusks of immense proportions, laboured for some time to make an impression, but after a while his strength was exhausted, and he retired. The next in size and strength then advanced, and exhausted his exertions with no better success. A third then came forward, and applying those tremendous levers with which his jaws were armed, and which he wielded with such prodigious might, he at length succeeded in dislodging a brick. An opening once made, other elephants advanced, when an entrance was soon obtained sufficiently large to admit the determined marauders. As the whole herd could not be accommodated at once, they divided into small bodies of three or four. One of these entered, and when they had taken their fill they retired, and their places were immediately supplied by the next in waiting, until the whole herd,

upwards of twenty in number, had made a full meal. By this time a shrill sound was heard from one of the elephants, which was readily understood, when those that were still in the building immediately rushed out and joined their companions. One of the first division, after retiring from the granary, had acted as sentinel while the rest were enjoying the fruits of their sagacity and perseverance. He had so stationed himself as to be enabled to observe the advance of an enemy from any quarter, and, upon perceiving the troops as they returned from the village, he sounded the signal of retreat, when the whole herd, flourishing their trunks, moved rapidly into the jungle.

Information had been conveyed to the officer commanding the guard, before he reached the village, that the elephants had attacked the granary; he arrived however too late with his detachment to save it. Upon entering, he found that the plunderers had devoured and destroyed the greater part of what it contained. A ball from a small field-piece was discharged at them in their retreat; but they only wagged their tails, as if in mockery, and soon disappeared in the recesses of their native forests.

A large painting of the subject of the dead elephant, (see page 81,) has been made by Mr. William Daniell for Colonel le Baron de Noual de la Loyrie, a very liberal patron of art.

CHAPTER VIII.

RAJEMAH'L.—A SUTTEE.—BUDGEROW.

We now took our passage in a country ship to Calcutta, where we stayed only a few days, when we launched upon the broad bosom of the Hoogly. We were exceedingly struck with its imposing magnificence; and who has ever directed his eye over the wide waters of this celebrated river without being similarly impressed! The varieties of feature which it presents, both of still and active life, the associations it calls up, from the fables and superstitions attached to it, the busy activity of human pursuits which it constantly displays, are all highly interesting to the traveller; while the reverence in which it is held, especially after its junction with the other western branch, when it assumes the sacred name of Ganges, raises those unavoidable emotions that, in defiance even of well-grounded prejudice, inspire almost a veneration for its consecrated waters. Upon the whole, this is, perhaps, the most distinguished river upon the face of the globe, whether we consider the lofty regions of perennial ice, never yet penetrated by mortal foot, in which its unknown source is concealed, the stupendous precipices over which it dashes in its progress to the plain, the natural im-

pediments it surmounts, the extent of country through which it flows, the distance to which its waters are transported by the superstitious and devout, its commercial importance, the veneration in which it is held by so many millions of people, or the fertility and populousness of the districts through which it winds its majestic way.

Upon commencing our voyage up this magnificent river, we were particularly struck by the exquisite delicacy of form and grace of motion displayed by the young Hindoo women, who were continually seen performing their daily lustrations in the sacred stream, or bearing away its consecrated waters with a sedate reverence, either for domestic or devotional purposes. They carry the water on their heads in three globular vessels of brass or of earthenware, placed upon each other, each diminishing in size, and forming the figure of an indented cone with the apex flattened, and nothing can exceed the ease and elegance of their movements under these becoming burthens.* I am indebted to the kindness of Sir Charles Wilkins † for the following melancholy narrative of one of these beautiful Hindoos: As he was once passing up the Hoogly, he saw an immense alligator plunge in among a party of bathers, and seize a lovely girl just rising into womanhood, with whom he dashed into the middle of the current that was then running at the rate of eight miles an hour. The creature darted through it like an arrow, defying pursuit, which was

* See frontispiece.

† Sir Charles is the celebrated Dr. Wilkins, one of the profoundest Oriental scholars in Europe. He was knighted the latter end of last June.



immediately attempted by the lighter boats that were then upon the river. They could not, however, make head against the force of the stream. Meanwhile the poor girl who had been seized, her legs hanging on one side of the monster's jaws, and her head and shoulders on the other, was seen to raise her hand as if supplicating that assistance which no one had the power of rendering her. The alligator rushed with his burden up the most rapid part of the current, as if determined at once to baffle all attempts at a rescue ; and, having then turned into the calm deep water, sank with his prey, and was seen no more. Alligators have been frequently caught in the Hoogly, and opened, when several pounds weight of armlets and ankle rings, with other ornaments worn by women and children, have been found in their stomachs.

As we proceeded up the river, the current ran so strongly against us, and the wind was so generally unfavorable, that it was nearly a month before we entered the Ganges at Sooty. In our progress, we landed and made a short stay at Rajemah'l. Here the country begins to change its appearance considerably; a continued chain of hills rises above the town for a long distance up the southern bank of the stream, which adds a most agreeable diversity to the scene. Rajemah'l was originally a place of great consequence, of which there are even now many remains, though at this time it is a place of little consideration, presenting the appearance of a large, meanly built village. There are still to be seen, in a very dilapidated state of course, several rooms of what was originally a spacious palace. Some of these apartments, as the remains show, were of marble, and

no doubt once glittered with all the gorgeous pomp of eastern magnificence: they are now a refuge "for the moles and for the bats."

In the neighbourhood of this once memorable spot, for it was once the mighty capital of a still mighty province * and a royal residence, there are several remarkable buildings, out of the walls and roofs of which trees of various kinds and sizes were growing when we visited Rajemah'l, and some too of considerable bulk. There was especially a mausoleum, still in a perfect state of preservation, surmounted by a large dome; out of this a vigorous peepul tree grew and nearly overshadowed the entire building. It is supposed that crows or paroquets drop the seeds of different fruits upon the old walls or roofs of deserted structures, and that these seeds are nourished into life and growth by the deposit of slime and dirt which are the invariable accompaniments of neglect and desolation. The mausoleum was still tolerably entire, though evidently suffering from the ravages of time. The tree which grew from the dome had not the least appearance of a stunted plant, but seemed to derive sufficient nourishment from the walls to support it even to a much larger growth; and from the mischief which it has already done, there is no doubt, as its bulk increases, that it will ultimately destroy the tomb.

Before we quitted this neighbourhood we had the opportunity of witnessing a suttee, † one of the most

* Bengal.

† The suttee is an Indian widow who burns herself upon the body of her dead husband.

revolting customs of a besotted superstition to be found in the records of ages. The widow was young and interesting, rather stout, but finely shaped, and scarcely darker than a woman of Italy. We had no difficulty in approaching the pile sufficiently near to see all that passed with a most appalling distinctness. She had an infant a few months old, at which she gazed with a vacant indifference, as if the mental absorption of a higher duty left her no thoughts for earthly objects;—she seemed scarcely conscious of its presence. There was, indeed, a sort of sublime tranquillity in the expression of her features, amid the frightful preparations that were making around her, which could not but excite my admiration at the firm tone of her mind and her resolved energy of purpose; yet this was almost neutralized in my breast by a feeling between pity and disgust, and though I could have wept at the contemplation of what she was about to suffer, I could also have railed on her for the brutal apathy with which she seemed prepared to meet her dreadful trial. A considerable interval elapsed before all things were ready for the one great act of immolation, and by this time some change had clearly taken place in her sensations. There was now a manifest confusion and nervous anxiety in her clear dark eye, which gradually became more expressive, but more wild. Her senses had been evidently "steeped in forgetfulness," or at all events paralyzed by the too free use of that drug* which is so often employed, and with such fatal efficacy, upon these and similar melancholy occasions, in order to disarm

* Opium.

the terrors and confirm the fortitude of those miserable victims who are doomed by the ferocious sanctity of Hindoo superstition to a premature death, and that too the most horrible. She was rapidly recovering from the partial stupor in which her mental faculties had been involved, and in proportion as her perception cleared, her terrors visibly multiplied. Her actions, which had at first appeared merely mechanical, now seemed directed by her returning impulses, which every moment grew stronger and more distressing. Still, though there was manifestly a fierce struggle within, it was plain to be seen that her efforts to obtain the mastery over her wavering resolution were those of no common mind and of no common energy; she was, however, so assailed by the tide of emotions which now seemed to rush like a torrent upon her soul, that her actions were often incoherent. She divided among her friends the different ornaments of her dress, with the look and bearing of one who from the distraction of her thoughts scarcely knew what she was doing; but suddenly, hearing the cry of her babe, all the feelings of the mother returned; her eye dilated with a sudden gleam of tender recognition, her lip quivered, her bosom heaved, her breath escaped in short, hard gaspings; she sprang forward, tore it from the arms of an attendant, and clasped it passionately to her bosom. Her convulsive sobs struck upon my ear with a most thrilling potency of appeal, but there was no possibility of rescuing her from the doom to which she had chosen to submit. It was now clear to all the bystanders that she was inwardly shrinking from the last act of this most horrible

sacrifice;—she stood before us an image of mute but agonized despair.

The officiating Bramins, seeing that it was time to urge the consummation of this detestable oblation, and fearing lest she should relent, commanded all her relatives, friends and attendants, to retire. In a few moments a large area was left around the pile, within which stood no one save the unhappy victim and her sanctified executioners. Before the area was cleared, one of these smooth-browed monsters had forcibly taken the child from the mother's arms and given it to an attendant, unheedful of the cries of the one or the agonies of the other. The widow—and now did she indeed appear beautiful—knowing what was to succeed, gave way to the struggles of nature, fell on her knees, raised her eyes towards heaven, and clasped her hands in a transport of speechless anguish. One of the Bramins approached her with an air of calm but stern authority, raised her from her recumbent position, then with the assistance of a companion equally stern and unfeeling, violently urged her towards the pile. She struggled, and the energy with which despair had armed her enabled her successfully to resist the united efforts of those sleek high-priests of the altar of a most infernal superstition. Upon seeing this, several of these cruel functionaries rushed forward and dragged her towards the faggots, which were well smeared with ghee* in order to accelerate their combustion—a contingent mercy arising out of the policy of securing a speedy termination to the suttee's sufferings, as, the quicker

* Clarified butter, made from the milk of the buffalo.

the process, the less the chance of rescue or escape. The moment her voice was raised, it was drowned in the mingled clamour of tom-toms, pipes, and the shouts of hundreds of half mad fanatics, who had assembled to see the horrid issue of a devoted fanaticism. Her struggles were now unavailing, she was soon dragged to the pile and forced upon it; at this time she appeared exhausted by her continued exertions. When seated on the faggots, her husband's head was placed upon her lap, the straw, which had been plentifully strewed underneath the wood, was fired, when the flames instantly ascending, enwrapt the beautiful Hindoo, at once shutting her out for ever from human sight and from human sympathy. Lest in her agonies she should leap from the pile, she was kept down upon it by long bamboos; the ends being placed upon her body by the officiating Bramins, who leaned their whole weight upon the centre of the pole with which each was furnished, and which each zealously applied to this holy purpose, so that she could not rise. Her sufferings were soon terminated, as the wood burned with extreme rapidity and fury. Thus ended this infernal holocaust!

What can we think of the advocates and abettors of a religion which lends its sanction to such a barbarous rite as that of human sacrifice? It is in truth a strange anomaly in the moral organization of man, that extremes should be so apt to meet—that some of the best qualities of the human heart, by being forced to an unnatural extension, should so often gradually advance towards deformity until they partake of those very qualities which are diametrically opposed

to them. When they approach almost to a point of contact, the good frequently imbibes the taint of the evil, until they finally merge in one. The fastidious mercy of the Hindoo, which is carried to such a pitch of extravagance, save in observing the ordinances of his sanguinary ritual, is so microscopic, if I may be allowed the term, that he would shrink from destroying the most noxious reptile, or even the minutest animalcule which floats in the mote of a sunbeam, were he conscious of extinguishing animal life; and yet there is not a more cold-hearted villain alive than your merciful Hindoo. He would smile at the death-pang of a stranger to his idols; he would exult at the most horrible torture that could be inflicted upon one who denied the supremacy of Brahma, the judgments of Siva, and the avatars* of Veeshno. He is only the most civilized of savages.

As we proceeded up the river from Rajemah'l the Colgong hills were exceedingly beautiful. On both sides the country appeared to be well cultivated, while the number of boats perpetually passing up and down upon the broad bosom of the Ganges reminded us of the parent stream of our own dear country, which can only vie with it as a commercial river, for in every other respect it sinks into comparative insignificance before this queen of inland waters. The current was unusually strong for some time after we left our last halting-place, and the stream so tortuous, that we had no little difficulty in tracking round the curvatures which the channel here presents. Our progress being very slow, we had a full opportunity of

* Incarnations.

observing how numerous, as well as mighty in form and horrible of aspect, were the alligators with which the waters of this sacred stream abound, especially in the more level country through which it urges its majestic course. It is astonishing to see the havoc which these monsters make yearly among the native population, and yet with what perfect apathy they are regarded. They seem to excite neither fear nor apprehension. They lift up their huge dark bodies before the boats, which may be said to swarm upon this beautiful river, as if in defiance of human power, and with a consciousness of their own terrific endowments. They sometimes wallow in the shallows with their heads turned towards the sun in all the indolent repose of familiar luxury, regardless of any thing but the stronger among their own species. It is here, however, that they suffer the most signal retribution for their cruel and fearless devastations, as they are frequently shot in this defenceless position, when the only penetrable parts of their bodies are exposed to the deadly aim of the matchlock or the rifle. An immense animal was killed by the tindal* of our budgerow, basking upon a bank, upon which the boat struck almost immediately after. It measured fifteen feet and a half in length. A considerable time elapsed before we got our budgerow off the bank.

The budgerow is a large, unwieldy, flat-bottomed boat, with eighteen oars, more or less, and a lofty poop, covering nearly three fourths of its entire length, under which are two capacious cabins, with Venetian

* A sort of coxswain, to whom is entrusted the management of the boat.

blinds, at once to exclude the sun and admit the air. Every night we moored beneath the shelter of some convenient bank, and got under weigh again in the morning. Whenever we landed above Rajemah'l we found those religious devotees, so well known in India under the name of Gosseins, to be extremely numerous, endeavouring, like all the fakeer tribes, to extort benefactions from every one they happened to meet, and they were invariably successful among the natives, whose superstitious fears of their power and dread of their supernatural influence are quite amazing.

We were induced to land and visit the waterfall of Mooteejerna, but it did not at all realize our expectations, falling far short of what we had seen in the southern extremity of the peninsula. Monkeys were very numerous in the neighbourhood of this fall, and the print of a rhinoceros's foot was visible along the path we were obliged to pursue, which greatly alarmed our native attendants, who have a prodigious horror of this formidable forester. We saw, however, no beasts of prey, but occasionally heard the dismal howlings of the jackals, with which the whole continent of Asia abounds, and which may be considered, though frequently a great annoyance, one of the blessings of a torrid country, since they devour immense quantities of carrion, which, but for them, would scatter contagion and pestilence over its parched though fruitful plains. On our approach to Colgong, whither we proceeded on foot, leaving our budgerow to track up the river, intending to join her at a stated spot, we were hospitably entertained with new bread and delicious fresh butter, which was sent to us by an English

resident. We had walked several miles under a hot sun, and were a good deal fatigued, so that this fare, simple as it was, inspired us with fresh vigour to pursue our walk. On entering the nullah at Bauglepore, we saw an immense number of alligators in the sacred tanks, which are not only allowed to remain there unmolested, but are fed by the fanatic Hindoos, who would withhold a similar benefaction from a starving fellow-creature of a different creed, though he were actually in the jaws of death.

We now proceeded to the spot, indicated as the place of meeting when we left our boat, in order to embark; but when we reached it the budgerow had not arrived. It turned out that an accident had occurred which retarded her progress; she had sprung her mainmast, and in spite of all the efforts of her crew it went by the board. The consequence was, that we were obliged, though much fatigued with our previous exertions, to resume our walk for above three miles, ankle-deep through burning sand, before we could meet with a boat to take us on board our budgerow. At a convenient place we put in to refit, and, having repaired her masts, rigging, &c., which was a matter of rather tardy accomplishment, as Indian mariners are not very energetic in their operations, we continued our progress up the river. The morning that succeeded our land-excursion was ushered in by a refreshing breeze, which wafted us briskly up the stream; but, having scarcely recovered from the fatigue of the preceding day, we were glad to avail ourselves of the quiet repose of our cabins. We were plentifully supplied with all necessaries by a little cook-boat, which sailed

with us, and regularly furnished our meals, or provided any intermediate supply that we might choose to call for. This day we counted no less than thirty alligators basking upon the sand; and during the morning we witnessed an exceedingly agreeable sight of one hundred boats, of all shapes and sizes peculiar to this country, making their rapid way down the river from Patna to Calcutta. The scene was as full of life as of novelty: they did not pass us by in silence; the regular cadence of the rowers' song, as they kept time to the measured dash of their oars, and the buzz of voices with which it was constantly mingled, gave some variety to the chaunts of our own native attendants and of our boat's crew, to which we had by this time become so long familiar that all the charm of novelty had vanished from our minds.

As we advanced, we found the current more rapid, running strongly against us, and the course of the river occasionally obstructed by large banks of sand. Our dandies* were frequently up to their shoulders in water, into which they plunged in defiance of the alligators, and many were in view, urging the heavy bark against the stream where the oars could not be brought into play on account of the narrowness of the shoals between the sands, which now so frequently interposed as to render our passage as tedious as it was slow. The danger was occasionally much greater than we had at first apprehended, for the sands being perfectly covered, the impediment did not appear: so that we perpetually ran the hazard of

* Dandies are native boatmen.

striking upon them from our ignorance of their vicinity. Here, however, though not gratuitously, the alligators did us some service, for they frequently gave us notice of our proximity to these impediments, of which, but for their timely presence, we should have been altogether ignorant.

Whilst our crew was struggling with those difficulties which interrupted our progress, we had the opportunity of witnessing an accident not uncommon on the Ganges. A large boat, heavily laden and her sails set, coming down the stream with the full impetus of the current, which, as I have before said, was here more than usually rapid, and increased by the momentum imparted by fourteen sturdy rowers, struck suddenly against a projecting cape, and was immediately swamped. The crew had no difficulty in saving themselves, as the watermen on the Ganges swim like swans; but the cargo, consisting chiefly of perishable materials, was so much damaged as to be almost entirely worthless. The boat did not sink, though a good deal injured by the shock. The outcries of the boatmen were tremendous when, upon regaining the boat and baling her, they discovered that almost every thing which she had contained was spoiled past recovery. As we could afford them no relief, we did not attempt to offer any consolation, but left them to their lesson of practical philosophy, and proceeded on our voyage. Soon after this adventure, striking again upon a shallow, we were obliged to cross to the further bank where the water was deeper and the channel consequently safer. On this side of the river we found the bank high, and frequently



tumbling down, from the constant concussion occasioned by boats striking against it when borne rapidly down the current. We witnessed several of these earthy avalanches, one or two of which fell so near us as to endanger our budgerow; our apprehensions, therefore, were not of the most agreeable kind, until the elevation of the banks began to decline, and the danger was thus proportionably diminished. At this part of our progress our attention was arrested by a very curious novelty. From the continual wearing away of the bank, the roots of a large banyan tree were completely denuded to the very surface of the water. They were apparently sapless, and in many places the external coat had been removed by constant exposure to the elements and by the more destructive contact of human hands. We no longer wondered at the extraordinary fecundity of the superincumbent vegetation, when we perceived how Nature had provided for its support, and through how many different avenues it received its nourishment. The roots were twisted into the most fantastic figures, and were so tough and hardy, that they appeared to have suffered little positive injury from the various contingencies to which they had been exposed. The tree was vigorous, and new supports were dropping from the older branches, so that its growth was evidently not impaired. Our budgerow was dragged round the little cape which the stately banyan here formed on the bank, and the different twistings of the roots made so many resting places on which our dandies supported themselves while they pulled the boat against the current.

We now sailed with a tolerably fair wind, tracking with the assistance of our eighteen oars, until we reached Patna, asserted by some to have been the Palibothra of classical celebrity. It presents few vestiges of former magnificence, exhibiting no grand ruins to indicate its original greatness, if this really be the site upon which that ancient city formerly stood; so many other spots, however, have been indicated as claiming a similar honour, that I believe the original site of the ancient Palibothra will ever remain a historical problem still to be solved.

We were two days at Patna, having been most hospitably invited by the Nabob to take up our quarters for as long a period as we could make it convenient to stay, not in his palace, for palace he had none, nor in his family mansion, but in a bungalow which his father had erected on the very brink of the river, and which Sir George Barlow, when member of council, had repeatedly occupied. The Nabob was a very tall, stout, handsome Mahomedan, spoke English with considerable fluency, was remarkably intelligent, shrewd, and good-humoured, and, though a worshipper of the impostor of Mecca, had nevertheless divested himself of most of his religious prejudices. An eminent missionary, who, during one of his missions up the Ganges, resided in the same bungalow which we now occupied, had, as we were informed by the Nabob, been extremely zealous in his endeavours to make a convert of him. But although the sturdy Mussulman made no scruple of taking his bottle of loll shrob,* and of occasionally regaling himself upon

* Claret.

good English ham, which he, by way of soothing his conscience, devoutly called Westphalia venison, he nevertheless resisted all attempts at conversion, and candidly told his reverend friend, that, although he considered it no sin to eat pork and drink wine, still nothing could induce him to become a neophyte.

The Nabob kindly introduced us to the Rajah of Patna, a fine portly Hindoo, in the prime of life, and in the full vigour of his strength, active, robust, and hardy, entirely devoted to elephant and tiger hunting, and other sports of the field. He almost passed his life in the jungles, and the walls of his palace were covered with skins of wild beasts and serpents, the grim tokens at once of his ardour and of his prowess. It was a matter of no common occurrence to see a Mahomedan and a Hindoo upon such amicable terms as the Rajah and Nabob; but the former, a most unusual thing by the way, was as liberal a Hindoo as the latter was a liberal Mussulman. They reciprocally eschewed the prejudices of their respective creeds, and lived in extreme harmony together.

Among the curiosities which the Nabob submitted to our inspection, for he had many, was a morah, or footstool, formed of a vertebre of some huge creature, which the Rajah had presented to him several years before as a great curiosity, and so in truth it was. This colossal fragment of a once living frame was upwards of forty inches in circumference, and was a single joint of the backbone of an enormous serpent, which the Rajah, who was styled by the English residents in that part of India, the Nimrod of the East, had found in one of his hunting excursions through the

forest. According to the Nabob's account of the matter, as related to him by his friend the Rajah, as the latter was passing through the jungle, one of his attendants came up to him with two immense bones which he had picked up at a short distance from his master's tent. Upon examining these bones it occurred to the royal hunter that from their formation they must be part of the spinal structure of some animal, and, upon proceeding to the spot where they had been found, he was astonished at the sight of a prodigious skeleton. On inspection it proved to be that of a monstrous snake which had long been the tyrant of the forest. It was nearly perfect, and measured the enormous length of ninety-five feet. The whole of the backbone had remained precisely as it was when the creature expired. The head was not perfect; the lower mandible was in its proper place, but the upper had been removed. The attendants brought away the jaw and half a dozen of the vertebres, one of which the Rajah presented to the Nabob, who had converted it into a magnificent morah. It was enclosed in a kind of brocade, flowered with gold. The covering was so ingeniously fixed, as to be taken off at pleasure, and, when replaced, it formed with the bone a strong, compact, and elegant footstool. Our host assured us upon his veracity as a Mussulman, that what he had related might be relied on as a fact; and certainly the back joint, which we saw, fully corroborated his statement,—it was upwards of fourteen inches wide. If the large snake of Ceylon, by his extraordinary power of distension, can swallow a stag entire, even to the very antlers, surely a snake

measuring ninety-five feet might well despatch a buffalo.

From Patna we passed on to Dinapoor, and thence to the conflux of the Soane with the Ganges, which is truly a magnificent spectacle. Here we were again obliged to cross the river, and to encounter the danger of the high banks, in order to avoid the shallows which every now and then, as before, impeded our progress on the southern side. This was a necessity we had hoped to have escaped, and were by no means well pleased to submit to, as the earth still continued to detach itself at intervals in huge masses, sufficiently large to have overwhelmed our boat had they fallen upon it. The boatmen were occasionally a good deal perplexed in consequence of these unsolicited intrusions of another element, so that our boat was tossed about most disagreeably, and our progress remarkably tedious. The dandies however manifested no symptoms of impatience, except occasionally when they were called upon for any extra exertion, and then their execrations were loud and bitter. They swear with prodigious fervour, and perhaps there is no race of people upon the face of the earth that has such a large vocabulary of oaths as the Hindoos. Their women, almost without exception, are prodigal in the use of them, even beyond the most extravagant conception of the greatest blackguard in Europe. They swear in tropes as fervid as the clime which gives them birth, and as varied as that clime in the plenitude of its luxuriance.

Both wind and current were now against us, so that the day after we entered within the confluence

of the Soane and the Ganges we made but very little way. On the following morning we passed Buxar fort; but were not allowed to sail under it in consequence of the banks having given way from the frequent striking of boats against them, which had endangered the security of the walls. We were therefore obliged to cross the river where there was fortunately good tracking ground and quiet water. It was near this fort that Major Adams, in the year 1764, at the head of about six thousand sepoys and a few hundred Europeans, routed a native army of forty thousand men.

We next reached Ghazipoor, where there is a beautiful building, called in the language of the country, chalees satoon—the place of forty pillars. Here we saw several Hindoo children spinning tops, precisely like the common peg-top used by children in Europe, and spun in the same manner. This circumstance, though trifling, is not undeserving of notice. As the Hindoos are very scrupulous in their avoidance of European customs, and Europeans entertain no such prejudices but copy whatever they approve, the natural inference is, that this childish amusement was borrowed from Hindostan, and is of very primitive antiquity.

CHAPTER IX.

A MAHOMEDAN'S STORY.

BEFORE we reached Ghazipoor, as we were taking our tiffin* in the budgerow, the conversation happened to turn upon the superstitious veneration in which the Hindoos hold the sanctity of their respective castes. This, indeed, is so great as to baffle, except in a few instances, the efforts of the missionaries to turn them from their idolatries to the light of Christianity; and at all times their conversion, when it does take place, is extremely equivocal. In the course of our conversation I remarked, that the occasions were rare where Hindoo women had attached themselves to persons of a different caste, except the most abandoned among them, who lived by prostitution; and that their detestation of Mahomedans especially was so nationally rooted as to render it doubtful whether a single instance could be cited in which a Hindoo woman had allied herself to a worshipper of the Arabian impostor.

"Pardon your slave, sahib," said a Mahomedan servant whom I happened to have at this moment behind me, "but I can prove in my own person that such a circumstance has occurred, as my wife was a

* An Indian luncheon.

Hindoo, who has both relinquished her caste and her religion, and we have lived in the greatest harmony together for the last twelve years. She has abjured the creed of Brama, and now cleaves to that of Mahomet with the devotion of the most zealous among the faithful; she will yet be a houri in Paradise."

"How," said I, "did you manage to overcome the prejudices and win the affections of this gentle Hindoo?"

"Master shall hear," replied the man; and he immediately related the following story, which I shall beg leave to present to the reader in my own words, as it was delivered in very imperfect English, which, though sufficiently interesting to hear, would not probably be so to read.

"About fourteen years ago," began the Mussulman, as soon as he had obtained my permission to tell his story, "I was a resident in the town which we are now approaching, and which was at that time, or rather the neighbourhood, infested with those sanctified vagabonds who, under the general name of fakeers, levy contributions upon the charitable, and, by assuming an air of austere devotion, often contrive to render themselves the stipendiaries of some of the most powerful princes in Hindostan. They practise their duplicity upon the ignorance and superstition of their idolatrous brethren with such ingenuity and success, that in numerous instances they acquire an absolute spiritual dominion over them. They are at once the greatest impostors and the most profligate scoundrels upon earth, being frequently guilty of frightful enormities to obtain their

ends, and some of them are the most sensual wretches alive. They occasionally undergo the severest penances, which they consider a complete expiation for the blackest crimes; and, finding absolution at all times within their reach, they hesitate not to indulge in the grossest debaucheries, and when their souls are, as it were, ulcerated with guilt, to avail themselves of the spiritual remedy. A certain course of physical suffering wipes out all the record of past delinquency, and they become, according to their barbarous creed, purified from its deepest pollutions.

"At the back of the town there was, at that time, a very old ruin, in which was a small, dark chamber hollowed out of the earth at the end of a long, narrow passage, and lighted only by an aperture in the corner of the roof. The 'dim religious light,' thus admitted, like that of a solitary lamp within a sepulchre, only partially illumined the vault, being just strong enough to show the repulsive dreariness of this loathsome habitation, and its lack of every thing calculated to administer to domestic comfort. This gloomy recess was the abode of an Ab'dhoot*, who was reported to be a person of such extraordinary sanctity, that he could cure the most inveterate bodily diseases, and remove the most stubborn moral disorders, by only breathing upon the patient, who was sure instantly to be restored to a sound temperament, whether physical or spiritual, by the mere expirations of his sacred breath. This disgusting piece of abortive humanity was of dwarfish stature, and, although not old, shrivelled to a mere

* A sect of fakeers who go entirely naked.

skeleton; his bones protruded so disagreeably, and the whole development of his meagre frame was so distinct, that he might have been a perfect study for an anatomist. In spite, however, of his stunted figure, nothing could exceed the sinister expression of his countenance: it was perfectly demoniacal. At times his eyes sparkled with all the ferocity of one of his own kindred asuras;* at others it mildly radiated with that expression of sardonic humility which makes you fear while you detect the hypocrite.

"This semi-monster bore the character of a person pre-eminently holy; and, to say the truth, he performed the severest penances, nor shrank from the most excruciating self-inflictions, on which account he was so venerated by the inhabitants of the town, that they visited him daily in crowds to receive his benedictions, looking upon him to be little short of a divinity. It was known that he had with him a beautiful Hindoo, who was the constant partner of his cell, though seldom permitted to be seen; indeed, she never left her dreary abode but for water or some other domestic purpose. I had seen her as she occasionally repaired to the river to replenish her gumlahs;† yet, whenever any one addressed her, she invariably maintained a stubborn silence, at the same time evincing, by her nervous timidity of manner, that she was held in terror by some powerful but mysterious influence. I confess I was always much struck with her beauty whenever I saw her, and the

* Asuras are the evil spirits of Hindoo mythology.

† Water-pots carried on the head by the Hindoo women.

strict requisitions of the religion of which I had hitherto been a zealous advocate began to give way before my desire to become possessed of this lovely idolatress. She was known to have had two or three children; but, as they invariably disappeared as soon as they were born, it was reported that they had been received into the bosom of Siva, among the suras* of the supreme paradise, as the offspring of his vicegerent upon earth; for so great was the reputed sanctity of this wily devotee, that he was looked upon as the accredited minister of the Godhead himself.

"I had heard much of this extraordinary man, but held in supreme contempt the marvels that were related of him, as the mere fabrications of superstition; when, however, I saw the subject of these marvels, I felt satisfied that, instead of being accredited in this world by the source of all good, as he would fain represent, he was, on the contrary, a most consummate agent of the source of all evil. His countenance was an index of every thing that was vicious and repulsive, and I could not help pitying the unhappy creature who was doomed to share the dreary home of a being so externally hideous, and whom I suspected to be no less deformed in mind than in body. Having one day caught a sight of the lovely victim of superstition, for such she indeed proved to be, I determined to try if I could not ascertain from her something concerning the supernatural communications of the Ab'dhoot to whom she appeared to have so unaccountably devoted herself. I accordingly one morning watched him from

* Suras are good angels.

his lair into the town, whither he frequently resorted, and immediately repaired to the prison of his beautiful companion. After some difficulty, I made my way into the cavernous asylum of this young and lovely woman, which was considered sufficiently secure from desecration by any profane foot from the reputed holiness of the male occupant and the superstitious reverence in which he was held by the infatuated Hindoos. Upon seeing a stranger enter the dismal abode, which had never, at least within her experience, been cheered by the presence of any but that of the fiend-like being whose revolting rugosity of aspect, though so long accustomed to it, she still could not behold without an involuntary alarm, she started, and, uttering a faint shriek, threw herself upon the ground in an agony of terror. She entreated that I would depart, assuring me that if her lord and tyrant found me there, she should become the victim of his ferocious vengeance. The appeal was eloquent and irresistible; but I can scarcely describe what my feelings were at the sight of so beautiful a creature confined to such a loathsome dungeon with a companion who would have been honoured by the designation of a brute, for he was a demon in human shape. The chamber steamed with the unwholesome vapour so long pent up within its close and slimy recess. Its lovely inmate stood just under the aperture in the roof through which light was admitted, and the vivid beam fell full upon her expressive countenance, which was working with all the intense emotions of anxiety excited by the most fearful apprehensions. She pointed to the passage with a look of passionate supplica-

tion, but did not speak, as if she apprehended the possibility of her voice reaching the ear of him whom she dreaded more than the presiding Asura of Lohangaraka.*

"I once more tried to induce her to communicate to me whether her captivity, for such in fact it might be called, was voluntary or constrained. A tear stole into her eye and trickled silently down her cheek. I approached her, but she shrank from me as if I had been the herald of the pestilence. I was a Mahomedan, and she had been taught to look upon the followers of Mahomet as the most odious among mankind. She seemed almost horror-stricken at my vicinity, and her distress momentarily increased. I could not pacify her. She became at length so frightfully agitated that I conceived it prudent to comply with her wishes, and leave the den to which she appeared to be consigned a hopeless and miserable victim. I groped my way through the long passage and got into the broad sunlight, with a gloomy impression upon my mind, which I in vain endeavoured to shake off.

"Shortly after I had quitted the precincts of this horrible retreat, what was my consternation at beholding the fakeer almost at my side! He had evidently returned upon my steps, and had seen me issue from his infernal cell. He passed me without a word, but his large rolling eyes glared upon me with an expression of speechless, yet intense malignity, threatening destruction at every glance, as if

* Hot iron-coals. This is one of the twenty-one Hindoo hells mentioned in the Institutes of Menu, chap. iv. verses 88, 89, and 90.

the wretch, who had been so miserably 'robbed of nature's fair proportions' would, through their fiery orbits, have withered me into a thing as odious and marrowless as himself. I passed him hastily, but as soon as I was satisfied that he had entered his abode, and my actions were no longer exposed to his jealous scrutiny, I returned without a moment's delay, and entering the dark passage, placed myself in such a position that I could hear, though I could not see, all that passed. He evidently did not expect that any one would dare to violate the sanctity of his dwelling while he was present, and had therefore taken no precautions to exclude me; so that my proximity was entirely unsuspected. In fact he was too much engrossed by his ferocious purpose to have a thought for any minor object. His whole soul seemed to be merged in one absorbing sentiment of revenge.

"I had scarcely taken my position, near the entrance of the chamber, when I heard this almost sesquipedal deformity, with a sort of suppressed scream as indicative of fatal fury as the serpent's hiss, upbraiding his victim in terms of the bitterest reproach with having allowed his sanctuary to be defiled by the polluting foot of a stranger and that stranger a Mahomedan. She appeared to be mute with terror, as not a single word escaped her lips, though I could hear the deep sob which seemed to be heaved from the very bottom of her heart. He accused her of having appointed an intercourse with an alien, an outcast from the abodes of the blessed, and one doomed to the penalties of everlasting excision. He charged her with having dishonoured herself and him

by an attachment, for which he declared, with the most frantic asseverations, that she should suffer death. I heard her fall on her knees, I heard her deep sobs, her pathetic appeal, her entreaties for mercy,—pleading with all the eloquence of innocence, but she pleaded in vain. The devil to whom she appealed was not to be softened by entreaty, he gnashed his teeth like a creature maddened; he raised his arm—I no longer hesitated, but rushed from my hiding-place, and reached the side of the monster just as he was about to plunge a large knife into the heart of his victim. At this time I was a soldier and wore arms. My sword was already in my grasp; I seized the arm of the ruffian, and at one stroke clove him to the jaws. The skull gaped hideously as he fell, his limbs shrank for a moment, as if lessening their naturally dwarfish proportions; he then stretched them out to their full extension in the agonies of death, and almost instantly ceased to breathe. He lay upon the earthy floor of the cavern which reeked with his polluted blood, like a reptile loathsome to the sight, and even in death an object of disgust. I looked on him not only without pity, but with that sort of exultation which I should have felt at having mastered a tiger. I now approached the object of my timely interference, who stood trembling before me, as if the knife of her tyrant was still raised to destroy her. She gazed upon me with a mixed expression between unconsciousness and terror, which made me at first apprehend that the shock had overpowered her reason. I soothed her with expressions of the tenderest endearment, when, shortly recovering

her self-possession and looking upon her prostrate enemy, she gave a glance which spoke her gratitude far more eloquently than words, and burst into a violent flood of tears.

"There was now neither time for delay nor meditation. I resolved to quit the place immediately, knowing that here I could no longer be safe as the destroyer of one so highly venerated by the superstitious inhabitants of the neighbourhood. I was conscious that my life would be sought with the most ferocious hostility, as soon as the manner of the fakeer's death should transpire. As the interior of his cell was never visited, I knew that I was secure from detection for the moment. I, however, prepared for my instant departure, and the gentle creature whom I had so opportunely rescued, grateful past expression for her release from the hateful tyranny to which she had been so long subjected, gladly consented to become my companion. I took my way across the country, accompanied by my lovely Hindoo disguised in a Mahomedan costume, to a convenient place of embarkation down the river, where I hired a small boat and we proceeded with all despatch to Calcutta. During our passage, which was rapid, as the rains had only just ceased and the current was therefore strong, my companion related to me how she came under the protection of the monster from whom I had so fortunately rescued her.

"She told me that she was the daughter of a wealthy Cshatrya,* in the neighbourhood of Delhi, and near

* The Hindoos are divided into four casts: the Bramins, he Cshatryas, the Vaisyas, and the Sudras. The first are said,

her father's dwelling this hated Ab'dhoot resided in a den very similar to that from which I had so lately released her. So complete an influence did he obtain over her parent's mind, who, as she fondly observed, was a very devout man, that he believed the hypocritical devotee to be endued with a power only second to omnipotence. In fact he both reverenced and dreaded him, even more than he did the severe Siva, or the still more terrible Parvati.* He was continually endeavouring to impress upon his daughter's mind the extreme sanctity of this holy man, whom he represented to be as gigantic in spiritual might as he was dwarfish in stature, until at length she looked upon him with a degree of superstitious awe which she could neither resist nor control.

"The wily villain induced her one day to visit his lair, under pretence of making her the vehicle of a divine communication. Having been taught to consider any opposition to a request of his an absolute impiety, she did not hesitate to comply. The moment she was alone with him he took advantage of her defenceless condition and of her terrors to accomplish his iniquitous purpose, and when she communicated to her fanatic father the baseness of the holy man, he blessed her good fortune and his own that she had been deemed worthy the predilection of so sacred

in their sacred book, to have issued at the creation from Brama's mouth, the second from his arms, the third from his thigh, and the last from his foot. The Sudras are therefore looked upon as altogether ignoble and degraded.

* Parvati is a female deity consort of Siva, the destroying power of the Hindoo triad.

a character. She was so awed by the impression of his being endued with supernatural power that she feared to withhold her consent to continue with him. She had brought three children into the world, which he invariably destroyed as soon as they were born, and gave out that they were absorbed into the essence of the sempiternal Brama, as the offspring of the holiest of men. Her life she declared to have been one of most unmitigated misery until she was released from it by the death of her odious persecutor.

"We have now," concluded the gallant Mussulman, "been united for twelve years, and she has never once regretted her change of condition, nor have I the increased responsibilities of mine; we are still fondly attached to each other, and shall continue to be so until the angel of death shall disunite us only to perpetuate the tie in a world eternal. I have left her for the present in a comfortable dwelling a short distance from Calcutta, where I hope to rejoin her when Sahib* shall no longer have occasion for my services."

The Mahomedan concluded his story with a salaam, much to our entertainment; but he gravely declined the glass of wine which I offered him by way of acknowledgment, being too good a Mussulman to infringe the ceremonial law of the Koran; the moral law is quite another thing, and much less scrupulously observed even by the most fastidious worshippers of Mahomet.

I have omitted to mention in its proper place, that after passing Buxar fort we left the Ganges for a day or two, proceeding to Sasseram, a town of some cele-

* Master.

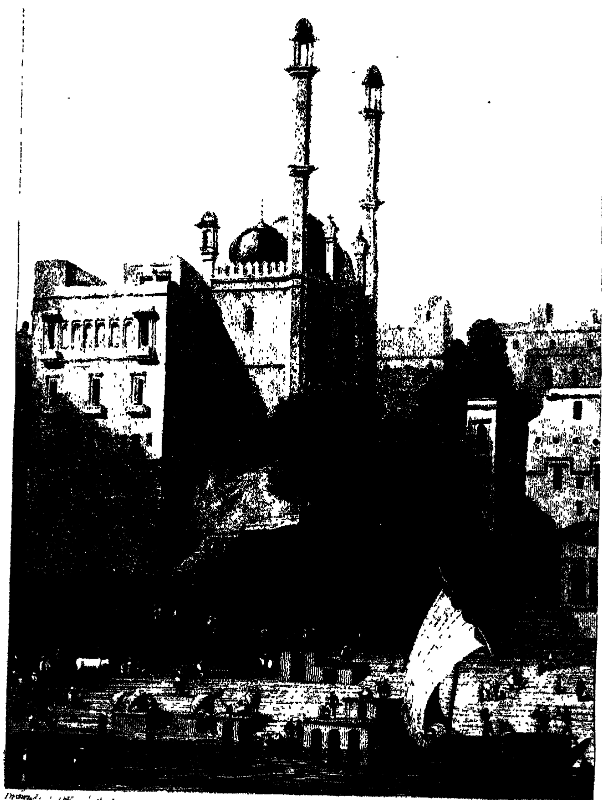


brity, about thirty miles south-west of Buxar. It is distinguished as the burial-place of Shere Shah, an eminent Afghan prince, who expelled the father of the great Akbar from Hindostan. The remains of Shere Shah were deposited in a mausoleum of considerable magnificence, built in the centre of a large tank, which is about a mile in circumference, surrounded by strong masonry. The dome is remarkably elegant, and encompassed by three turreted parapets having several small circular towers at regular intervals. The base of the mausoleum is a large square, in the centre of which the principal structure stands. It is octagonal and flanked at each angle of the quadrangular basement by a low-domed tower, scarcely less magnificent than the parent edifice from which it is detached; yet to the beholder's eye on the opposite shore the four smaller domes appear to be a part of the main building, though in reality they have no immediate connexion with it. The interior of the mausoleum is plain, but there is a gloomy grandeur about it which awakens feelings rather painful than agreeable. The remains of Shere Shah, with those of several members of his family, are deposited in the lower story. The ruins of a bridge which formerly communicated with the mausoleum are still visible upon the eastern side of the tank. This fine structure is rapidly falling to decay, and the beautiful reddish stone of which it is composed is greatly discoloured by age and neglect.

Shere Shah was an Afghan prince, who rendered himself famous by dethroning Humaioon, son of the heroic Baber. After a splendid career of military success, he became emperor of Hindostan, over which he

reigned only five years, when he was killed by the bursting of a shell, at the siege of Callinjer, a strong hill-fort in the Bundelcund district, about eight hundred and thirty-five miles from the city of Allahabad.

This emperor took the name of Shere from his having dispatched a large lion with a single blow of his sabre; Shere signifying a lion.



CHAPTER X.

BENARES.—MUSJID.—DEVOTEES.

From Ghazipoor we soon reached Benares, the most holy city of Hindostan, the seat at once of Braminical learning and of Braminical superstition, the great sanctuary of the religion of Brama, the centre of all that is sacred, the focus of all that is wise, the fountain of all that is good;—so say the veracious Hindoos in that most populous and enlightened country of Central Asia, which has at once given them

"A local habitation and a name."

Benares takes its name from two rivers, the Benar and the Assee, which flow into the Ganges, the one above and the other below the city. They are about three miles apart, and betwixt them stands the celebrated capital of a populous and extensive district. The intermediate space is filled with temples, houses, gauts, the latter of which are prodigious flights of steps descending from the walls of those buildings which here occupy the banks of the Ganges to the margin of the river; and, as the banks at this spot are extremely high, those flights are composed of a great number of steps, exhibiting the most magnificent masonry and formed of very durable granite. Here

indeed the superstitious adoration paid to the Ganges may be daily seen. In the estimation of the Hindoos, there is not a name upon earth, and scarcely in heaven, so sacred. Its waters are said to descend from above, and to purify from every stain the man who undergoes in them a thorough ablution. To die upon its banks, moistened by its stream, is deemed a sure passport to paradise. Journeys extending to thousands of miles are undertaken for the purpose of beholding and bathing in its sacred current; many rash devotees even yield themselves to a voluntary death amid its waves, fancying that they thus secure complete felicity in the future world; others devote their offspring to a similar destiny.

The variety of the buildings in this vast city may be said, humanly speaking, to be almost infinite; and, distinct as its decorative features are, exhibiting the ancient Hindoo architecture in all its various but opposed beauties of detail and exquisiteness of ornament—for it varies considerably from the modern—Benares may be said to present objects to the contemplation of the artist and virtuoso, such as, perhaps, will be found in no other city in the world in greater profusion. The only Mahomedan building of any note which it contains is the Musjid, a large mosque built by the Emperor Aurungzebe to humble the stubborn fanaticism of the Hindoos; for he was himself too great a bigot to look upon bigotry with an indulgent eye. The mosque is ornamented at either angle by two lofty minarets, from which the tyrant could command a sight of the whole city. It was erected upon the former site and with the materials of one of the most sacred temples

in India, as a monument of the triumph of the crescent over the hosts of the idolator. The Hindoo sanctuary was destroyed to make room for the Mahomedan, and, with all the meanness of a narrow and bigoted soul, Aurungzebe used to command his licentious soldiers to repair daily to the roof of the mosque, which overlooks the sacred gaut below, and gaze upon the Hindoo bathers, who considered themselves tainted by the scrutiny of profane eyes; so that they were thus cruelly interrupted in their daily devotions, while the proud conqueror made those devotions an object at once of his ridicule and of his revenge. The Hindoos suffered a hard bondage under the government of this unfeeling tyrant, who sacrificed all principle and all sense of humanity to his ambition; and they may look upon the Mahomedan conquests in India as the iron age of their history.

From the minarets of Aurungzebe's mosque there is the finest prospect imaginable, and English visiters, in spite of the contempt in which they are said to be held by every true son of the faithful, are obsequiously shown the beauties of this building by a pliant salaaming Mussulman, who for a few rupees would no longer hold it profane to allow a Christian visiter to take a cool bottle of claret within the sacred shade of the sanctuary, dedicated, as his followers captiously maintain, to the most abstemious of prophets. From the river above Benares, as well as from the mosque, the prospect is unusually grand, though the city, when examined in detail, scarcely realizes the impression made by a distant view. It is of great extent, and apparently filled with high and stately

buildings; and indeed this is the fact, but when the traveller enters, he is greatly disappointed. The streets are so thronged, and so narrow, that you can scarcely pass along. The houses are frequently seven or eight stories high, and united on either side by balconies, extending from, and connecting the opposite windows, so that the street often appears to be arched by innumerable bridges. The city is full of life and bustle. The bazaar is crowded with people, and with commodities for sale as various as the tastes and caprices of the purchasers. There are numerous shops, in which manufactures of different kinds are carried on with the greatest activity. Here are to be seen Bramins naked, and apparently reduced to the most abject destitution; whilst others appear to abound in wealth, being splendidly attired, carried in gaudy palankeens, or in hackeries,* with gorgeous canopies, drawn by two prancing horses "with long flowing manes."

Benares is very extensive, and contains an immense population; there are said to be upwards of eight thousand houses in it belonging to Bramins alone. This will perhaps excite the less surprise, when it is considered that Benares is the present school of Hindoo theology, "the university," as it has been truly observed, "whence Bramins are yearly sent to propagate the reign of error." Here are said to be upwards of eighty schools in which Sanscreet only is taught. It appears somewhat strange that the pagodas in this city should be not only so few in number, but

* Hackeries are heavy covered carriages with two wheels, generally drawn by bullocks.

so small and inconsiderable. There is one, indeed, which should not be passed over in silence. It is a handsome building, dedicated to Mahadeva or Siva. Within it are two statues of the divine bull, beautifully sculptured, and there is also a small brazen image of Surya, the Apollo of the Hindoo Pantheon, standing erect in his car, drawn by a horse with seven heads. It is upon the whole well executed, though the Indian artists are certainly in general far less successful in their casts than in their sculptured figures. In this temple the floors are literally covered with the sacred waters of the Ganges, from the quantity used at their daily offerings. Near the entrance, a number of lazy, fat Bramins daily congregate for the sole purpose of begging, and in this they far transcend even the mendicant friars of the Christian church. It is really astonishing what immense sums they annually levy upon the charitable and religious of their own creed, who think they do God service by administering to the necessities—which stand for debaucheries, as many of them are the most debauched wretches in existence—of His vicegerents upon earth. Alas for Braminical sanctity! The extent to which mendicity is frequently carried among the Bramins in India is scarcely to be conceived; and the airs of authority which these sturdy beggars assume are as arrogant as they are disgusting. Such is their ascendancy over the minds of the superstitious population, that they levy an enormous tax in this way, and from that portion too of the community which can with difficulty procure the necessaries of life. In the province of Bengal

alone, it has been computed that there is a population of at least two millions who subsist entirely by begging; thus, supposing each person to obtain no more than eighteen pence a week, it would amount to upwards of seven millions sterling annually, and this, too, extracted for the most part from the labouring classes, which are extremely poor. Begging holds a conspicuous place among the religious duties of the Hindoos; indeed none among their community can attain to the supreme rank of spiritual distinction, except through this honourable occupation. The Yogues, who are so highly esteemed for their sanctity, are universally mendicants, and so complete is their influence over the minds of the vulgar, that these latter esteem it an enviable privilege to be permitted to administer to the necessities of those holy men. It is considered a positive degradation for a devotee of any repute to submit to the drudgery of an honest trade. Thus it is that these sacred persons are the most indolent, arrogant, and too often the most licentious wretches alive. It is impossible to help feeling that the mendicant fraternities belonging to a branch of the Christian church must have derived their origin from these Eastern idolaters. The coincidence is too strong to be accidental. The begging friars may certainly claim the sanction of heathen, though they cannot of apostolic, antiquity.

At the time we visited Benares, the population was computed at upwards of five hundred thousand souls. The number of brick and stone houses in this extensive city was calculated at twelve thousand, and of mud houses at sixteen thousand. Since that period

the number of both, but more especially of the latter, has considerably increased, having extended to the neighbouring villages. Benares is decidedly the most populous city in Hindostan. There exists at present a very amicable intercourse between the natives and Europeans. Since the establishment of the police by Mr. Hastings, in 1781, the security here against fraud and robbery is unequalled in any part of the British dominions in India. In fact, since the year just mentioned, when the peace of the whole district was disturbed, and the safety of the Company's territorial possessions in Asia threatened by the insurrection of the Zemeendar of Benares, this town has enjoyed the most undisturbed repose. The war-trump has been seldom heard within its walls, and its tranquillity has not been disturbed by the roar of hostile artillery. Whilst the horrors of war have been poured into the neighbouring districts, and the scythe of devastation has swept over their fruitful plains, Benares has been spared, and has gradually increased in magnitude, in importance, and in wealth. For this the people who throng her streets and worship at her shrines are indebted to Mr. Hastings, and his name is now held in the highest veneration among them. However this much-injured man may have been led, from the peculiar circumstances of the times, and the critical position in which he stood, to exercise occasional acts of oppression, he was certainly one of the ablest statesmen and one of the best governors ever sent to India, and the respect with which the name of Warren Hastings is still pronounced, in that very city which was so vehemently declared by his calumniators

at home to be the theatre of his tyrannies, will be a sufficient refutation of the charges with which he was so wantonly and so cruelly assailed, as he who was both respected and beloved as a ruler could never have been really a tyrant.

The ancient name of Benares was Casi the splendid, but at the period of the Mahomedan invasion it most probably changed its name with its masters. In 1017 it was taken by Sultan Mahmood. It does not, however, appear that the Mahomedans established themselves permanently in this part of India until the end of the twelfth century, after which it followed the fortunes of the Patan and Mogul dynasties, until the whole district of Benares, together with the city, fell under British domination in 1775; and to British counsels and government it is indebted for the uniform prosperity which it has enjoyed since the dominion of its present rulers was firmly established there in 1781. A few years after this, however, Benares was the scene of a most dreadful tragedy. Mr. Cherry, the British resident and three English gentlemen were barbarously murdered at the suggestion of Vizier Ali, the deposed Nabob of Oude. The Judge, Mr. Davis, defended himself and family until assistance arrived. He displayed extraordinary presence of mind, and no ordinary degree of heroism upon this critical occasion. Hearing what had befallen the unfortunate resident, and that his house was to be the next object of attack, he made all his family ascend to the roof; then placing himself at the top of a narrow winding staircase, the only passage to their place of refuge, armed with a short spear, he resisted

the assailants so vigorously, that he kept them at bay until he was rescued from his perilous situation by the timely arrival of a government troop of cavalry from the adjacent station of Sultanpoor. This atrocious transaction on the part of Vizier Ali caused a great sensation at Calcutta, but though the instigator escaped for the moment, he became soon afterwards a state prisoner at the Presidency, where he was confined under one of the bastions of Fort William, and where, pitied by few and regretted by none, he finally closed his iniquitous life.

There is a most absurd legend respecting the sanctity of Benares, which, though it partakes of all the extravagances of eastern fable, exhibits an unexceptionable moral, and as this is not always the case with similar legends, it may be thought not unworthy of a place in these pages. It is stated to have been originally built of gold, but in consequence of the sins of the people it became stone, and latterly, owing to their increasing wickedness, it has degenerated into clay. The Bramins assert that " Benares is no part of the terrestrial globe, for that rests on the thousand-headed serpent Ananta, (Eternity,) whereas Benares is fixed upon the point of Siva's trident; as a proof of which, they allege that no earthquake is ever felt within its holy limits, and that in consequence of its peculiar position it escaped destruction during a partial overwhelming of the world." However the writings of the Hindoo philosophers and divines may be deformed by wild speculations, monstrous exaggerations, and marvellous fictions, it must nevertheless be confessed that, amid the motley mass

of extravagant fable, a vein of morality is frequently to be discovered, which would not disgrace the wisest era of European civilization. But, though by no means deficient in speculative morality, I think there is no nation under the sun among whom practical morality is so lowly estimated and so little pursued.

The greatest moral enormities are frequently encouraged by the Hindoos, and, especially when practised against strangers to their religion, set down by them as among the cardinal virtues; and it is, perhaps, a striking feature in the character of this extraordinary people, that, at the very fountain-head of their religion, whence it is diffused in ten thousand channels among the numerous population of Asia, there is, perhaps, more practical delinquency to be witnessed than in any other city in India. When there is pollution at the source, what is to be expected but that the stream should augment its defilements as it increases in volume? which is really the case, and must continue to be so until those defilements are removed—until the fountain-spring be suffered to flow onward free and pure as the mountain-torrent, not forced into the foul and narrow channels of prejudice, fanaticism, and superstition.

One of the most extraordinary objects to be witnessed at Benares, and which is generally one of great curiosity to the stranger, is a pagoda standing in the river; there is nothing to connect it with the shore. The whole foundation is submerged, and two of the towers have declined so much out of the perpendicular as to form an acute angle with the liquid plain beneath them. This pagoda is a pure specimen of an-

cient Hindoo architecture; it is of very great antiquity, and from its position now entirely deserted, for its floors are occupied by the waters of the Ganges, and, as far as I have been able to ascertain, there remain no records respecting it. No one appears to know when it was built, to whom it was dedicated, or why its foundations were laid upon the waters of the sacred river, unless it was on account of their sanctity. It is surprising how it has resisted the force of the current for so great a number of years, and that the dislocated towers should still stand, pointing, as it were, to their own approaching destruction, amid the constant percussion of the stream, which is uncommonly violent during the monsoons, and maintaining their apparently insecure position in spite of those periodical visitations, to the violence of which every part of the peninsula is more or less exposed. It has been surmised, and with probability, that this temple was originally erected upon the bank of the river, which then offered a firm and unsuspected foundation; but that, in consequence of the continual pressure of the stream, the bank had given way all round the building, which, on account of the depth and solidity of the foundation, stood firm while the waters surrounded it, though the towers had been partially dislodged by the shock. Or it may be that even the foundation sank in some degree with the bank, thus projecting the two towers out of the direct perpendicular, and giving them the very extraordinary position which they now retain. Boats may be continually seen passing in and out between these submerged porticoes of a former generation, which now

stand amid the waters of the sacred Ganges, at once a venerable monument of the instability of human grandeur and the vanity of human endeavour to perpetuate in stone or marble enduring records of its skill, its industry, or its wealth! Babylon and Nineveh are

> "Numbered with the things o'erpast,"

and the "place thereof knoweth them no more!" Even the mighty piles of Egypt now only indicate what they have been, and, except the massy pyramids, that land of artificial wonders presents nothing but splendid ruins of its former greatness and supremacy among the kingdoms of the world.

Benares being celebrated throughout India as the seat of theological learning and philosophy, an extract from Bishop Heber's journal, and two from a writer of a different age, may be interesting, as conveying an idea of what the sanctuaries of Hindoo worship are and what they have been; for these extracts will show that during the lapse of nearly two centuries and a half the superstitious devotions of the Hindoos have undergone no manner of change. After the bishop has described the sacred city generally, he says, "Our first visit was to a celebrated temple named the Vishvayesa, consisting of very small but beautiful specimens of carved stone-work, and the place is one of the most holy in Hindostan, though it only approximates to a yet more sacred spot adjoining, which Aurungzebe defiled, and built a mosque upon, so as to render it inaccessible to the worshippers of Brama. The temple-court, small as it is, is crowded, like a farm-yard, with very fat and tame bulls, which thrust

their noses into every body's hand and pockets for grain and sweetmeats, which their fellow-votaries give them in great quantities; the cloisters are no less full of naked devotees, and the continued hum of 'Ram! ram!' is enough to make a stranger giddy. Near this tower is a well with a small tower over it, and a steep flight of steps for descending to the water, which is brought by a subterraneous channel from the Ganges, and, for some reason or other, counted more holy than the Ganges itself: all pilgrims to Benares are enjoined to wash and drink here."

From the narrative of Fitch, who visited Benares during the latter part of the sixteenth century, it will appear that the superstitious reverence of the Hindoos was then precisely similar to that which now so frequently shocks the Christian traveller at once by its impurity and extravagance. Fitch's narrative is full of minute descriptions of idols which he saw in the different temples, and of the various modes of worship daily offered to them Some of his details are curious. Of these idols he quaintly says, "Some be like a cow, some like a monkey, and some like the devil; many of them are black and have claws of brass with long nails, and some ride upon peacocks and other fowls which be evil-favoured, with long hawk's bills, some with one thing and some with another, but none with a good face. They be black and ill-favoured; their mouths monstrous, their ears gilded and full of jewels; their teeth and eyes of gold, silver, and brass." These are the words of an observing man, and they tally in every particular with the descriptions given by all subsequent writers,

and attested by hundreds of modern travellers who have not come before the world in the characters of authors.

With respect to the devotees who prowl about the temples at Benares, we saw some of the most revolting objects that can be supposed to exist in any state of human society; they were disgusting beyond description, and Fitch has alluded to these monsters of devotion in his narrative already quoted. Of one in particular he says, "His beard was of enormous growth, his hair hanging more than half down his body, his nails two inches long; he would cut nothing from him, neither would he speak—he would not speak to the king." I shall presently take the liberty to describe one among the multitude which we saw at Benares, as he was even remarkable among many of the most extraordinary objects in human nature; he was what they call an Ooddoobahoo of the Yogue tribe. These visionaries live frequently in the depths of the jungles, like wild beasts, subsisting on roots or fruits, or on the casual benefactions of travellers; they go perfectly naked, having their bodies daubed with cow-dung and sprinkled with wood-ashes, neither cutting their nails, their hair, nor their beards. These monsters, for they are truly so, as well in moral as in physical deformity, occasionally inflict upon themselves the most intolerable tortures, in order to establish a claim, as they pretend, upon the Deity to everlasting reward in paradise. Their inflictions are so severe, and sometimes so horrible, that they would seem to be beyond the power of human endurance, did not almost daily experience

prove the contrary. When they have submitted to a certain course of infliction, they demand eternal happiness as a right, having, as they conceive, established their claim by the sanctity of their penances, and these, as I have already said, are truly frightful. Some of them keep their limbs in particular positions, until the sinews and joints become immoveable; others chain themselves to trees with their faces towards the rising sun, in which position they sometimes remain for years, if death do not release them from their torments, and are fed meanwhile by devout passengers, who throng to the scene of their sufferings, and offer them the most servile homage, as beings of superhuman endowments and untainted sanctity. Others nightly sleep upon beds composed of iron spikes sufficiently blunt not to penetrate their flesh; thus subjecting themselves to sufferings absolutely incredible. Others, again, bury themselves alive in a hole just capacious enough to contain their bodies, having a small aperture to admit the hand of the charitable passenger, who supplies them with food, and in this narrow grave they will continue for years.

The man to whom I have alluded had stamped upon his emaciated body the seal of the first-mentioned penalty. He had vowed to keep his right arm in a vertical position above his head for a certain length of time; but when the term of probation had expired, the arm remained fixed, so that he could no longer use it; the sinews were shrunk, the limb had withered; the nails had grown to an enormous length quite through the hand, which was clenched, and

looked like monstrous claws. The whole appearance of the man was squalid and repulsive in the most odious degree. His hair was long, matted, and filled with filth; his shaggy beard, tangled and thick with the revolting accumulation of years, covered his meagre chest, which was smeared with cow-dung and ashes. His eyes glared with an expression of hardened and reckless impiety, induced doubtless by the supposition of his claims to a blessed immortality. He scowled upon all around him who did not seem disposed to administer to his wants, among whom were my companions and myself; and the silent arrogance of this unwholesome beggar, for to beg he was not ashamed, was truly disgusting.

CHAPTER XI.

SHEWALLAH GAUT.—CHEIT SINGH'S INSURRECTION.

Upon our arrival at Benares, we took up our abode near the Shewallah Gaut, the former residence of Cheit Singh, who has become memorable in the annals of British India from the insurrection which he raised against the English government during the administration of Warren Hastings, when, but for the prompt and energetic measures of the governor, the possession of India might have been lost to this country. The Shewallah Gaut is situated at the northern extremity of the city, on the very margin of the river. It is a handsome building, but by no means splendid, neither is it very capacious. It exhibits nothing of the Eastern palace. There is a large quadrangle behind it, in which are several small temples. These were considered to have been polluted during the insurrection just alluded to, by the human blood which was spilled in their immediate vicinity: so that, in consequence of this defilement, they have not been since used for religious purposes. The Zemeendar made his escape from the left wing of the building through a wicket which immediately faces the water; and, as the banks of the river are here very steep, he let himself down, by turbans tied

together, into a boat ready to receive him, immediately crossed to the opposite shore, and proceeded with the utmost expedition to Lutteefpoor. The square story upon the roof of the Shewallah Gaut was added by Sir Charles Wilkins, who occupied a portion of that building after Warren Hastings quitted Benares. In order to be as cool as possible during the hot nights, he had a sloping canopy raised upon the roof under which he slept. It was open on every side to the full influence of the atmosphere, so that from its elevation he enjoyed all the night breeze, without being exposed to the noisome visitation of those numerous reptiles which always swarm in the lower apartments of houses in India.

I am indebted to the kindness of Sir Charles Wilkins for the following interesting anecdote: Whilst he was an inmate of the Shewallah Gaut, and but a short time after the flight of Cheit Singh, a fakeer of remarkably squalid and grim aspect came one morning to wash his dirty body in the sacred waters of the Ganges. It bore anything but evidences of recent ablution, and his hair, which was unusually thick and long, was matted with the accumulated filth of half a generation. It appeared that he had but recently arrived from some distant quarter, where there was no sacred water in which to cleanse his hallowed limbs, as he impiously considered them, so that he had suffered the incrustation of years to gather upon them, without any effort on his part to divest himself of the disgusting incumbrance. He descended the Gaut, and entered the water with his long hair trailing upon the steps behind him, until it at length



floated on the bright, unruffled surface of the sacred river. He washed the capillary burthen of his huge head with great care, and evidently divested it of a load which must have been far more sacred than agreeable. When he had completed his ablution, apparently much to his own satisfaction, he quitted the water with his long black hair, the living badge at once of his beastliness and of his sanctity, carefully twisted round his arm to keep it out of the dirt. As soon as he reached the top of the steps, he entered the left wing of the Shewallah Gaut, which had been unoccupied since the flight of the Rajah, for the centre only was inhabited by Sir Charles Wilkins, ascended to the flat terraced roof, where, placing himself upon his back, and resting his head upon the low parapet, with his face exposed to the full blaze of an ardent sun, the intense heat of which was augmented by the reflection from the chunam* plane upon which his body rested, he suffered his hair to hang down upon the wall, remaining in that position without the least apparent inconvenience until it was completely dry. He did not stir from this position until he had succeeded in his object, when he gathered up his long black locks as before, and disappeared. The hair of this idolatrous Nazarite had attained to the extraordinary length of twelve feet.

As the insurrection of Benares, in 1781, was one of the most memorable events in the annals of British India, from the results to which it led, first in strengthening and extending the Company's government over a very populous district of Hindostan, and next in

* A sort of lime-ash, composed of pounded shells.

leading to one of the most invidious of those charges brought against the persecuted Governor-General, by which his enemies thought to accomplish his ruin,—a short account of it may not be uninteresting to the reader.

Cheit Singh was constituted Zemeendar of Benares by Mr. Hastings, in 1770, under stipulations which decidedly rendered it a feudal tenure. By the provisions of this tenure, he was to pay certain sums into the Company's treasury, as occasion might require, for the protection which he enjoyed under their government. His father, Munsuram, originally possessed but half of the small village of Gungapoor, in the province of Allahabad; but, by gradual additions, and by the policy of a crafty ambition, he finally laid the foundation of the Zemeendary of Benares, which his son and successor, Bulwunt Singh, in thirty years, considerably enlarged, and increased greatly in importance. He, however, was much indebted for the advancement of his prosperity and influence to the protection of our government in India. Cheit Singh, his son, when he succeeded his father, was confirmed in the Zemeendary, and admitted to much more extensive privileges than had been before enjoyed by the previous Zemeendars, through the intervention and under the especial sanction of Mr. Hastings, but upon the implied condition of his contributing to the exigencies of the government under which he ruled. He became a feudatory, not by a slavish compulsion, but by a wise choice, in order to avail himself of the advantages which such a tenure secured, in guaranteeing to him the protection of the British Government. He

was therefore to all intents and purposes pledged to contribute towards the support of that government to which he was indebted for the enjoyment and security of his possessions. These were forfeited by the rebellion of 1781, when Cheit Singh was obliged to relinquish them, and he died at Gualior, in the province of Agra, in 1810. Upon his expulsion from Benares, the lands were transferred to a collateral branch of the family

The causes which influenced the insurrection were these: In 1778 intelligence arrived at Calcutta of a war with France, when it was resolved in council, that, in order to maintain the exigencies of the war which would no doubt involve our Indian government, the fulfilment of stipulations entered into with Cheit Singh, when the Zemeendary of Benares was confirmed to him in 1770, should be exacted. He was in consequence called upon to contribute five lacs of rupees, about sixty thousand pounds sterling, towards meeting the expenses of that year. For eight years no application of the kind had been made to him, so that no opposition was contemplated by the government to this moderate and equitable demand. He made no objection to fulfil the conditions of his feudality, but nevertheless evaded their fulfilment by the most plausible delays. After exhausting every artifice so common to the astute mind of a Hindoo, and finding all fail, he at length, in the most servile manner, pleaded his utter inability to pay the sum demanded, on account of the failure of his resources. This was known to be a mere subterfuge, as he was notoriously the richest Zemeendar in the country:

the plea, therefore, did not avail him, and when he found at length that the government became more peremptory in its demands, the money was advanced without further scruple. He had evidently, however, made up his mind to resist all future payments, and would no doubt have done so in the present instance, had he been prepared. In proportion as he became rich, he became also ambitious, and it was more than suspected that he secretly directed his thoughts to extending his own power by the extinction of that of his protectors; and had his talents been equal to his resources, or had he been opposed to a man of inferior abilities to Mr. Hastings, he might have accomplished his object.

The following year a similar demand of five lacs of rupees was made on the Zemeendar, when he employed similar shifts to those which he had already practised, in order to evade payment. He sent a vakeel protesting, in the most solemn manner, his want of sufficient funds to meet the demand, nor was the money at length advanced until two battalions of sepoys, whose maintenance and pay were charged upon the sordid Rajah, had been quartered in the neighbourhood of Ramnagur. Seeing that his conduct had excited the suspicion and displeasure of the Governor-General, he again sent his confidential agent to make his excuses, and to promise upon oath a regular payment of the assessment made upon his Zemeendary. These excuses, though trifling and hollow to the last degree, were accepted upon condition of his future ready compliance; and this grace was at the same time accompanied with an assurance that the demand would cease

on the part of government as soon as the cause of it should be removed. It is somewhat surprising that a statesman at once so profound and so acute as Mr. Hastings should have been imposed upon by the mere animal cunning and profligate duplicity of the unprincipled Hindoo, when the obligation of an oath is known to be so little regarded by those narrow-minded and self-interested idolaters. On the solemnity of the Rajah's promise the government so implicitly relied, that they immediately acted upon it, prospectively appropriating the money, which their feudatory covenanted to pay within a given time, to the support of a detachment of sepoys then stationed in the province of Malwa, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Camac. These troops were on field-service, and consequently entitled to a certain addition of pay, which was calculated upon as about to be advanced from the Rajah's treasury, on the faith of his most solemn promise. In consequence, however, of his failure in fulfilling his engagement, this detachment, whose necessities had not otherwise been provided for, was reduced to the utmost extremity of distress for want of the necessary supplies in provisions and money; many of the men deserted, while the complaints of such as remained began to be loud and bitter. Thus the perfidious Zemeendar was guilty of inflicting a double injury upon the government, to whom he was indebted both for his political security and personal prosperity; since, by withholding what was so equitably due from him, as well in fulfilment of his promise as upon the stipulations of his tenure, he at once obliged them to

forfeit their pledge, and weakened the strength of their army by inducing desertion among their troops.

This year a further demand had been made upon Cheit Singh, based upon the tenure of his Zemeendary, to supply fifteen hundred contingent troops to meet the exigencies of the war. Upon his pleading, as usual, his inability to comply with this requisition, the demand was reduced to a thousand; he offered two hundred and fifty, but supplied none. His subterfuges and tergiversation were disgusting; aware as he was of the extreme distress of the government to whose protection he was indebted both for his personal and political security, and to which he therefore owed not only his personal fealty, but every assistance which the resources of his Zemeendary enabled him to appropriate, his mean shifts and evasions to comply with its just requisitions were in the highest degree politically criminal. It very soon became evident to Mr. Hastings that he was deliberately planning the overthrow of the Company's authority in India, and the establishment of his own upon its ruins. Mr. Hastings has been greatly censured for what his enemies have called driving the Rajah to extremities; but surely it could not have been wise policy to forego a claim for assistance upon a rich and powerful prince, who was pledged to afford it when the government stood in need of that assistance, and when to forego it was only arming the party from whom it was due with additional means of doing mischief; since the greater resources he was left in possession of, the greater his chances of being able to accomplish the main object of his ambition, which was,

as it afterwards appeared, the subversion of the Company's government. The legality of the claim made by the Governor-General was never even disputed by the wily Zemeendar; in fact, he invariably promised to fulfil what he admitted to be a just demand, but always contrived, after having made the first advance of five lacs of rupees, to forfeit his pledges. Moreover, the very circumstance of his not protesting against the claim was a virtual admission that it was a just one, for so cunning a politician would have readily availed himself of the chances and delays of expostulation, and of the position of an aggrieved party, rather than have exposed himself, without either law or justice on his side, to the hostility of a power with whom he was well aware that, in spite of the difficulties under which it was then struggling, it was perilous to contend.

The claim made upon Cheit Singh was not only moderate, but justified by circumstances. He was known to be making vast efforts towards securing his own aggrandisement. He was known further to have inherited immense wealth from his predecessor, which he had considerably increased, and deposited in the two strongholds of Bidzee Gur and Lutteefpoor, hill-forts held to be impregnable; to this he annually made great additions, so that the demand made upon him by the government was really not such as to cause him the least inconvenience to fulfil. He moreover kept up a large military establishment of cavalry, infantry, and artillery; he had several strong fortresses, besides the two already mentioned, well stored and garrisoned. The ryots, from whom he derived his revenues,

were in a state of much more comfortable prosperity than that class of people generally are. His tenants were encouraged to treat British subjects with incivility, and he secretly kept up a correspondence with the Mahrattas and other powers hostile to the British supremacy. Above all, he had made every necessary provision for an open revolt, and was evidently only waiting for a favourable opportunity to declare it. All this was not the mere assumption of an equivocal suspicion on the part of the Governor-General, but matter of ascertained fact, and therefore demanded an immediate employment of the most energetic measures to counteract.

In consequence of the frequent acts of duplicity—nay, of treachery—of this crafty Hindoo, Mr. Hastings at length resolved to punish his numerous delinquencies by exacting from him the heaviest penalty that he was able to bear without reducing him to absolute distress, as it would tend greatly to relieve the exigencies of the government at the same time that it abridged those powers which the Rajah's wealth put at his disposal for endangering the security of the Company's dominion in India. This was one of the acts of oppression, as they were termed, which raised Mr. Hastings such a host of enemies at home, through the hostile representations of Mr. Francis.* The latter in India had been his constant and unyielding opponent, and drew down upon him the ferocious declamation of Burke, who for three whole days laboured, with all the vindictive energy of a savage to compass the ruin

* Afterwards Sir Philip Francis, and suspected by some to be the author of those letters which became so celebrated under the signature of Junius.

of that much-injured statesman, to whom Great Britain is at this moment indebted for the stability of her government and the prosperity of her possessions in India. The cause of Burke's hostility was at once selfish and altogether unworthy of a great mind; it was excited solely because Mr. Hastings had refused to appoint a profligate relation of the Irish statesman's to a place of trust in India. However great in intellect, Burke had a puny soul. The veneration in which the name of Hastings is held to this day in the most flourishing city of Hindostan will give the lie to the calumny that he was either a weak legislator or a tyrant; on the other hand, the warmest admirers of Burke will not deny that he was a man of narrow prejudices and vehement passions—that he was at once heartless, selfish, and unforgiving.

"If," says Mr. Hastings, in his letter to the Council of Fort William, relative to Cheit Singh's insurrection at Benares,—"If Rajah Cheit Singh possessed the Zemeendary of Benares in his own right, and with an inherent and exclusive authority; if he owed no allegiance to the Company, nor obedience beyond the payments of a stipulated tribute; I am liable to condemnation for exacting other duties from him, and for all the consequences of that exaction, and he is guiltless. But if the Company, possessing the acknowledged rights of his former sovereign, held an absolute authority over him; if, in the known relation of Zemeendar to the sovereign authority or the power delegated by it, he owed a personal allegiance and an implicit and unreserved obedience to that authority, at the forfeiture of his zemeendary, and even of his life and

property, at the discretion of those who held or fully represented the sovereign authority; if, in corroboration of the general and implied obligation, he was bound to it by written engagements and specific conditions; I am warranted in my assertion of the rights of government, which were fully and wholly delegated to me, and he alone is responsible for his opposition to them, and for all the consequences that have attended that opposition."

Nothing can be more conclusive than the arguments of this letter. Suspecting, as Mr. Hastings did, the fidelity of Cheit Singh to the Company's government, he very wisely determined to visit Benares, for the purpose of bringing the matter to an issue, and arrived there on the 14th of August 1781. The Rajah was absent from the city, but entered it a few hours after the arrival of Mr. Hastings. The Governor-General immediately sent to him, refusing him an audience that evening, and desiring that he would postpone his future visits until he should receive an express invitation, as the Governor-General had some previous communications to make to him which would be conveyed in the course of the next morning through the resident. Accordingly, on the following day, a letter was transmitted through that functionary from Mr. Hastings to the Zemeendar, charging him with his numerous omissions of fealty to the Company's government. Cheit Singh's reply was couched in terms apparently humble enough, but really in terms of defiance. It is surprising with what a wily humility he conducted himself through the whole of his correspondence with the Governor-General, previously

to the fatal consummation of his rebellion. Without stating any grievance, he places himself in the position of an aggrieved person, and, at the very time that he avows the most submissive acquiescence to the supreme authority under which he ruled, he insidiously impugns that authority by the most covert and sinister implications. The letter just alluded to, though worded with the affected humbleness of one who was pleading the cause of guilt, was in fact less a vindication of himself than a recrimination on the Governor; no charge was made, but the grossest injustice on the part of the latter was implied, and this evidently with a prospective view to the issue which the Rajah meditated, when he no doubt calculated that he should be able to interpret the sinister ambiguity of his written communications into a vindication of those measures which he was at that very moment projecting. The letter was anything but satisfactory to Mr. Hastings; it expressed no concern for past derelictions, nor any desire to atone for them; neither did it hold out the slightest intention to pursue for the future a different course. In short, it fully satisfied the Governor-General that the intentions of the Rajah, though disguised under the garb of ostensible humility, were in fact positively hostile; so that he justly conceived the most prompt and vigorous measures to be necessary, as well for his own personal security as for that of the government over which he presided. He accordingly adopted what he considered the most efficient plan for crushing the threatened mischief *in limine*, and thereby preserving the Company's rights and interests in that rich and populous province.

Determined to act with that vigour which the occasion required, Mr. Hastings immediately on receiving the Rajah's reply, sent an official order to the resident to proceed early on the following morning to the house of that prince, and place him under arrest, but to treat him with the respect suitable to his rank. This order was duly executed, and Cheit Singh, still keeping up the farce of respectful submission to the supreme authority, acquiesced in it without the slightest opposition, apparently manifesting deep contrition at his past duplicity; so much so, indeed, that Mr. Hastings was in some measure deceived; at all events his suspicions were considerably lulled, and thinking it therefore necessary to give his prisoner some encouragement, he wrote as follows, in answer to a very submissive letter addressed to him by the Rajah.

"I have received your two arzees from the hands of Mr. Markham, and understand their contents. That gentleman will wait on you in the afternoon, and explain particulars. Set your mind at rest, and do not conceive any terror or apprehension."

Nothing surely could exceed the kindness of this letter. It evinced no disposition to tyranny. On the contrary, it manifested the most amiable and generous feeling, and it is in consequence of the practical influence of such feelings, that the name of Warren Hastings is venerated in India at this moment by natives as well as by Europeans. The Rajah's reply to the letter just quoted is curious, as exhibiting the extreme pliancy of his temperament, and the masterly adroitness of his cunning.

"Your gracious letter has been received, and has made me acquainted with your commands. You order, that in the afternoon Mr. William Markham will come to me, that I must not suffer any apprehension to disturb me, but remain at ease in my mind. My protector! wherever you spread your shadow over my head, I am entirely free from concern and apprehension; and whatever you, who are my master, shall, as such, determine, will be right."

At this time, Mr. Hastings had prepared further instructions for the resident, which had been transmitted to him; but, before he could leave his house to put them into execution, he was informed that considerable bodies of armed men had crossed the river from Ramnagur, and, assuming a very unequivocal attitude, had surrounded the Shewallah Gaut. Two companies of grenadier sepoys, commanded by Lieutenants Stalker, Scott, and Simes, composed the whole of the guard placed over the Rajah, and they were stationed in the large quadrangle at the back of the building enclosing the apartment in which the prisoner was confined. So utterly unapprehensive were these gallant officers, as they but too fatally proved to be, of treachery or danger, that they had neglected to order the troops to prepare for resistance, so that they had not a single charge in their cartouches. Major Popham, indeed, from whose regiment they had been selected, sent another detachment under command of a subaltern, with ammunition, to reinforce them in case of an attack; but this precaution was taken too late. When these latter arrived at the Shewallah Gaut, they found all the avenues

to it blockaded by a great number of native troops in the Rajah's pay, who obstinately opposed their entrance. This detachment was so small, that it could not venture to force a passage against such a prodigious superiority in numbers, and it was therefore obliged to retire. Meanwhile the barbarians, who had surrounded the quadrangle in which the sepoy guard was stationed, inflamed no doubt by the resistance within the square, made a furious attack upon them, and, being well provided with ammunition, of which the sepoys were utterly destitute, soon obtained the mastery, and the brave guard, together with its officers, was thus cut off to a man. After the dreadful affray had terminated, the bodies of Lieutenants Stalker, Scott, and Simes, were found lying near each other shockingly mangled, and quite dead.

It was during this scene of carnage that Cheit Singh made his escape. This had evidently been prepared for, and was successfully planned. As soon as he came out of the wicket, which opens on the river, he found a boat ready to convey him across. He lost not a moment, and was quickly beyond the reach of pursuit, while the multiplied shouts of his ferocious followers conveyed to the ears of the Governor-General ominous notice of disaster, which was but too fatally realized shortly after by the tidings of the Rajah's escape and the massacre of the sepoy guard. The troops who had secured the prisoner's escape followed him across the river in the boats which they had provided to accomplish his rescue, leaving the detachment of sepoys sent by Major Popham in possession of the Shewallah Gaut.

The moment intelligence of the arrival of armed men at the Rajah's residence was conveyed to Mr. Hastings, who had taken up his abode in a different quarter of the town, he instantly directed Major Popham to proceed to his encampment without delay, and bring up the whole of the force under his command to support the grenadiers. The encampment was unhappily upwards of two miles from the scene of carnage. Though this order was executed with all possible promptitude, that gallant officer arrived too late to rescue his brave but unfortunate men from destruction. The whole detachment lay butchered within the square, and the manner in which the bodies of the three British officers were mangled, showed by what a fierce spirit of revenge their murderers were actuated. Major Popham looked upon the dismal scene with feelings of the most poignant sorrow, greatly embittered by the consciousness that he had not the power of retaliating the injury upon the author of it. He however took the best precautions which circumstances would admit, though it was clearly evident that both Mr. Hastings and the small force at his disposal, were in a situation of great peril.

CHAPTER XII.

INSURRECTION AT BENARES, CONTINUED.

After his escape, Cheit Singh fled to one of his strongholds, taking all his family and his whole force with him It seems almost a miracle that Mr. Hastings escaped destruction in this formidable insurrection, as he was almost entirely unprotected, not being able to muster around him more than fifty armed sepoys and about thirty civilians, while the enemy were upwards of two thousand in number. But we are perhaps to attribute his salvation to that prudent policy which is never entirely lost sight of, even amid the most tumultuary and ferocious acts of rebellion. The rebels knew that a signal revenge would be taken by the government at Calcutta for the destruction of their chief, and further, that every native state would instantly rush to arms, in order to oppose what they would have considered as universally decisive of the national fate. They would have joined the stronger against the weaker, and thus the petty Zemeendary of Benares would have been crushed by a host of neighbouring foes, acting upon the mere animal instinct of self-preservation. The wily Rajah well knew that there was a boundary-line, beyond which it would be at once impolitic and rash for him to

proceed, and to this foresight of the enemy, not to his forbearance, Mr. Hastings was no doubt indebted for his security.

Major Popham's regiment, with the exception of the detachment which had been cut off in the insurrection, was stationed at Mirzapoor, and was ordered to proceed without delay to Ramnagur, whither upwards of two thousand of the enemy had returned two days after the massacre, under the command of a confidential chief of the Rajah's. Lieutenant-Colonel Blair was also ordered to send thither a battalion of sepoys from the garrison of Chunar. Of these troops, Major Popham was to have the command, and proceed against the enemy's forces at Ramnagur. Captain Blair, who commanded the battalion dispatched from Chunar, was directed to halt at a safe distance from Ramnagur until further orders. Major Popham sent a similar mandate to Captain Mayaffre, who commanded the residue of his detachment, at the same time strictly cautioning him to abstain from hostilities of any kind, and attend to the safety of the party under his command, until Major Popham should arrive.

In order to ensure the success of his operations, the latter officer had made choice of an open plain immediately opposite to Ramnagur, for a battery of two mortars that were expected from Chunar. From the weakness of the fort in which the rebellious Zemeendar had taken refuge, Major Popham felt confident of soon reducing it, and of recovering the captive. The place was so ill provided against such an attack as he meditated, and was in such a very indifferent state of defence, that under skilful management it

must have fallen an easy conquest. The rashness, however, of Captain Mayaffre entirely defeated this admirable plan, and exposed to destruction the whole detachment placed under his charge. He entered Ramnagur expressly against orders, and was so galled by the fire from an unseen enemy in the narrow lanes of the town, that he lost all his coolness and presence of mind; his little party were thrown into confusion, and nearly the whole of them cut off. He paid the severe forfeit of his rashness, as he was killed, together with Captain Doxat and one hundred and seven sepoys. There were forty-one wounded.

Captain Blair conducted the retreat of this discomfited and dispirited detachment as far as Chunar, in the face of an enemy elated by success, and presenting a most formidable superiority of numbers; but so skilful was the management of that gallant officer, that they were able to make little impression upon the small yet determined body under his command. This happened just four days after the barbarous massacre at the Shewallah Gaut.

It was now evident that the government was involved in a new war, and what rendered it the more perplexing, their treasury was nearly exhausted. There was, however, no time for deliberation. Measures were therefore immediately taken by the Governor, to dispatch orders for assistance to the different military stations, which were by this time surrounded by a vigilant enemy. These orders were put into the hands of trusty messengers, and copies of each were sent to the several stations, but very few of them were received. The whole country

was in arms, so that most of the messengers were intercepted; some were made prisoners, and others returned without having executed their commissions. Two of Mr. Hastings's letters, however, reached Colonel Blair, who immediately ordered a battalion, commanded by Captain MacDougal, to proceed next morning to Benares. Mr. Hastings, having received information that the enemy intended to make an assault upon his quarters—and this was soon after confirmed by the hostile aspect on the opposite side of the river—determined, after consulting Major Popham and the other field officers who were with him upon the expediency of a retreat, to repair without delay to the fort of Chunar. On their way they met the detachment commanded by Captain MacDougal, marching to Benares, which immediately joined them, and proceeded with them to Chunar.

On arriving at that town, Mr. Hastings experienced the greatest difficulties in raising supplies for the consumption of the little army then at the disposal of the government in that neighbourhood. They were in the greatest distress for provisions, and indeed the situation of the Governor-General was altogether a most critical one, for so low was the Company's credit in India at this period, that their functionaries could not raise sufficient money even for the supply of the very limited number of troops which they had in pay in the Zemeendary. Under these circumstances, they must have suffered the greatest extremity of want but for the liberality of the Rajah of Berar's Vakeel, who volunteered to advance a lac of rupees to Mr. Hastings out of his own private funds, receiving as a

security a note in the Company's name for its repayment at a stipulated period.

About a week after the insurrection, Cheit Singh wrote a letter to Mr. Hastings, in which the deep cunning of his character was again strongly depicted, expressing some slight contrition for what had happened, and professing, though in terms extremely measured and equivocal, fidelity to the British government. He also sent an agent to make overtures for an accommodation, instructing his messenger to represent his sorrow at what had occurred, and to exonerate him from any concurrence in the fatal catastrophe at the Shewallah Gaut, but charging the whole to the insolence of one of the resident's servants, and to the excited state of his own troops, who were apprehensive for their Zemeendar's safety. He finally, through the same agent, made professions of the most absolute obedience and submission to the government which Mr. Hastings represented; but these were naturally received by the latter with suspicion. This embassy was evidently an after-thought of the wily Zemeendar's; it was clearly an artifice to throw the Governor-General off his guard, and gain time to establish his own security, and thus enable him to take the most effectual measures for shaking off the Company's yoke altogether, since his professions very ill accorded with the violence and tergiversation already so openly displayed by him.

Though Mr. Hastings had removed to Chunar, which was tolerably well fortified, still, from its proximity to Benares and from many other circumstances, it was by no means a position of security. Its dis-

tance from that vast and populous city, whose gradually encreasing strength gave him just cause for apprehension, was only seventeen miles. His situation, moreover, was in every way critical; as not only did the Nabob Vizeer, in spite of his professions of attachment and good faith, exhibit strong symptoms of a disposition to favour the rebellious Zemeendar, but the whole of his family were evidently enlisted in the same cause. Besides this, a large portion of the neighbouring province of Oude was in a state of positive insurrection; Behar, too, was invaded by Futteh Shah, this prince being supplied with the means of carrying on his hostile operations by Cheit Singh, who was the secret but main spring of the extensive commotion which at this moment prevailed throughout all the provinces immediately contiguous to Benares. Many of the Zemeendars of Bahar had manifested a disposition to raise the standard of rebellion, and even the Company's subjects were reported to have thrown off their allegiance, and to have enlisted under the banners of the enemy. Mr. Hastings was almost entirely without money or supplies, and, to add to the political perplexities of his position, all the troops within the fortress of Chunar were four months in arrear; so that he thus found himself at once surrounded by ferocious enemies, treacherous allies, and discontented friends.

In truth, nothing could exceed the perplexity of the Governor-General at this trying moment: without money to pay the troops, who were everywhere murmuring and evincing symptoms of mutiny, for they were really suffering the greatest privations in conse-

quence of the scanty supplies with which they were daily provided; encompassed by enemies and traitors, not knowing whom to trust or where to look for assistance; the panic of the sepoys daily strengthening, and their murmurs becoming proportionably loud,—absolute ruin seemed to stare him in the face, when a reinforcement unexpectedly arrived, which so far changed the aspect of affairs as to raise the drooping spirits of the troops and damp those of their adversaries.

It happened that Colonel Morgan, to whom among others Mr. Hastings had written for assistance but whose letters had never reached their destination, had heard some vague rumours of the insurrection at Benares, and soon became convinced of its truth from the circumstance of no regular intelligence reaching him from the place. It was therefore evident to his mind, that something serious had occurred. Justly concluding that orders had been intercepted, with a prudent foresight he resolved to anticipate them, and, acting immediately upon this resolution, despatched two sepoy regiments, thirty European artillery-men, and two companies of a European regiment, with four six-pound battering-cannon, one howitzer, several tumbrils, a good supply of ammunition, with draft carriage and cattle. This well-appointed detachment was commanded by Major Crabb, a spirited and enterprising officer.

Previously, however, to the arrival of this reinforcement, Major Popham's regiment, together with what force could be safely taken from the fortress of Chunar, had been encamped on a plain about a mile west of the garrison, under the command of Major Popham.

The enemy's camp, in which their principal strength lay, was at Pateeta, about six or seven miles from Major Popham's in the same direction. In addition to the small force already mentioned, Lieutenant Polhill had arrived with six companies of sepoys from the Nabob Vizeer's body-guard, which was supplied by the Company but paid by that prince. Lieutenant Polhill obtained some advantage over the enemy by defeating a considerable body of their troops on the opposite bank of the river, where he had been stationed in order to keep the communication open with head-quarters,—thus scattering through their ranks a spirit of intimidation, which was beginning at this time strongly to manifest itself, and securing a large quantity of grain that had been the principal object of the attack.

On the 3rd of September, just eighteen days after the insurrection at Benares, Captain Blair, with a battalion of sepoys and two companies of grenadiers, attempted to surprise the enemy's camp at Pateeta, but found that they were already prepared to meet him in the open plain, having obtained notice of his intention probably through the treachery of some of his agents, who held secret communication with Cheit Singh's army. The adverse troops were drawn up in good order, and exhibited a more than ordinary degree of discipline in their evolutions. A severe action ensued, in which this tumultuary force, flushed with their recent success, fought with an obstinacy that left the fortune of the field for some time doubtful: in fact the sepoys had already begun to waver, when, by a dexterous movement, the enemy's guns were suc-

cessfully attacked by the grenadiers, and immediately turned against them, so that the rout soon became complete, and Captain Blair was eventually left master of the field, with the capture of four guns and four tumbrils. One of the guns was spiked, in consequence of the carriage being so much injured that it could not be removed; the remainder, and one of the tumbrils loaded with ammunition, were secured; the other three tumbrils were blown up, together with a large quantity of loose powder Fifteen thousand rounds of shot, of different sizes, were found in a village at a short distance from the scene of action. In the present reduced state of the government's resources, the issue of this contest was a subject of great rejoicing, not only on account of the prize in arms and ammunition of which it left them masters, but also because it cast a depression upon the spirits of the adverse troops, which immediately paralyzed their energies, and thus greatly contributed to their future defeats.

This signal victory, however, for it proved to be signal in its consequences, was obtained at the fearful sacrifice of forty-eight men killed and eighty-five wounded, no less than one-fourth of the whole government force; nevertheless, it was a sacrifice whic was attended with the most beneficial results. The battle had been so obstinately contested, with such a vast inferiority of force on the part of the government, and the subsequent victory had been so complete, that it at once gave the enemy the most extravagant ideas of the military pre-eminence of their adversaries, and so completely satisfied them of their own inferiority, that they began to be dejected and alarmed,

while the opposite party regained their confidence in proportion as that of their enemies declined. Besides this, the native chiefs under subjection to the Company's government, who had hitherto either wavered or shown a disposition to revolt, were struck with awe, and thus prevented from violating their allegiance.

The conduct of Cheit Singh, when he was informed of the defeat of the troops at Pateeta, shows at once the innate baseness of his character and the savage fury of his heart; it furnishes, moreover, a full justification of Mr. Hastings, not only in suspecting the treacherous designs of that unfeeling rebel, but also in attempting to visit upon him the punishment of a refractory feudatory. Fourteen men, who had survived the unfortunate destruction of the detachment under the command of Captain Mayaffre, had been made prisoners, and were sent to Lutteefpoor, whither the Zemeendar had retired after his escape from the Shewallah Gaut: they happened to arrive on the very morning the news of the defeat at Pateeta reached that fortress. Cheit Singh, burning with rage at his visionary expectations being so suddenly overthrown, immediately gave orders for the execution of these unfortunate prisoners, when they were all inhumanly massacred upon the spot, in the presence of the sanguinary Rajah, with the exception of one poor fellow, who contrived to drag his lacerated body into the neighbouring wood, where he subsisted for some days upon wild fruits, but, returning to the fort, obtained the monster's pardon, and survived.

CHAPTER XIII.

INSURRECTION AT BENARES, CONTINUED.

It was six days after the decisive issue of the struggle at Pateeta that the detachment sent by Colonel Morgan under the command of Major Crabb arrived on the opposite bank of the river, and relieved Mr. Hastings from the fearful apprehensions under which he continued to labour, notwithstanding the late brilliant success at Pateeta; as he clearly saw that a single defeat would probably precipitate the overthrow of the Company's dominion in the East. His confidence was from this moment restored, and after this we see nothing but a series of defeats experienced by the rebel's ill-appointed and dispirited troops.

On the 13th of September, Major Roberts arrived with his regiment and a lac of rupees from Lucknow, whither he had been commanded to repair in order to receive Mr. Hastings, and for the protection of the Governor-General during the visit which he proposed paying to that city before his return to Calcutta. A few days after, a further supply of fifty thousand rupees was received from the native chief of Allahabad. This money was distributed among the troops, and the arrears paid up as far as could be prudently

done under the uncertainty of financial supplies. This at once restored confidence to the men, raising their spirits and animating their exertions; thus aiding Major Popham's preparations for the immediate and active renewal of hostilities. It is but justice to state that the sepoys, notwithstanding the numerous and severe privations to which they had been exposed, did not, on any one occasion, manifest the slightest degree of insubordination. Their dissatisfaction was merely expressed in murmurs which subsided as soon as the cause was, though but partially, removed.

On the 15th of September, Lieutenant Polhill crossed the river and joined Major Popham, whose force was now so considerably encreased that he was enabled to present something like a formidable array to the already discomfited and dispirited enemy. The entire force under his command amounted at this moment to about eight thousand effective men, admirably appointed and eager for the fray, while Cheit Singh numbered upwards of twenty-two thousand regulars, besides at least twenty thousand peasants and homeless adventurers, who had taken up arms in his cause for the chances of pillage, thus swelling his army to forty thousand men;—but these were, for the most part, an ill-disciplined host, and moreover disheartened by the apprehension of defeat. The best of these forces were at Pateeta, but the larger portion of them were with the Rajah at Lutteefpoor. Besides this army, Cheit Singh was in possession of several fortresses, two of which, Bidzee Gur and Lutteefpoor, were considered impregnable.

The Rajah's next resource was his wealth, on

which he fully relied as an amulet that would render him invincible. He was said to have inherited from his father a crore of rupees, upwards of twelve hundred thousand pounds, to which he was reported to have made very large additions, so that he might be considered to have nearly two millions sterling at his command. Cheit Singh, however, since the defeat at Pateeta, had been somewhat less lofty in his pretensions, and less ardent in his expectations of eventual success. He had been taught by the severe discipline of an unlooked-for experience, that the most adept cunning may be contravened by events against which no human foresight can provide, and that we are all under the arbitrary control of circumstances, from the most powerful prince to the most abject slave. Under those feelings which his doubtful position engendered, he wrote to Mr. Hastings in his usual style of equivocal humility, exculpating himself from the fatal results of the insurrection, representing himself as the greatest sufferer, at the same time making the strongest protestations of his own innocence and good intentions. In other letters, written by his express orders, the most ostentatious representations were made of his immense wealth and extensive political influence, the multitude and valour of his troops, the fidelity of his subjects, and their devotion to his cause. Mr. Hastings answered none of these letters, being by this time much too well acquainted with the man to rely either upon his truth or sincerity; but he was resolved to lose not a moment in availing himself of his present advantages to reduce the wily rebel to his former subjection.

In consequence of the suggestion of an intelligent native, who had accompanied Captain Blair in the actions of Ramnagur and Pateeta, and had rendered him very signal service upon both occasions, as well by his advice as by his local knowledge, it was resolved to attack Pateeta and Lutteefpoor at the same time, with a force sufficiently strong to ensure their capture. The Hindoo mentioned a pass behind the latter fortress, with whose locality he declared himself perfectly acquainted, and which, as he clearly showed, it would be necessary to secure before any operation could be successfully carried on against Lutteefpoor. This pass takes its name from an adjacent village. He advised that an attack should be simultaneously made upon the pass and the fort of Pateeta; because such a divided attack, as he very discreetly suggested, would distract the enemy's attention, and thus, by assaulting the pass when its defenders were quite unprepared to expect a foe, it might be gained without either much difficulty or loss; and it would, moreover, give the captors the same advantage over Lutteefpoor, as the pass would have over the garrison if the former were taken possession of without securing the latter; besides this, as the pass, if not secured, would have the command of every road, it would consequently render the possession of Pateeta, if gained, of which indeed there was not much doubt, a very uncertain tenure.

Major Popham, wisely appreciating the justness of these suggestions, saw in a moment that it was of importance they should be immediately acted upon; he therefore determined to do so without delay, and

the evening of the 15th of September was fixed on to put the plan into execution—for there was no time to be lost, and the enemy were still labouring under the depression caused by their late defeat; while his small but well-disciplined force were excited in an equal proportion by the recollection of their late success.

In pursuance of the plan laid down at the suggestion of his native ally, Major Popham divided his little army into two equal parts, placing one division under the command of Major Crabb for the attack of the pass, while with the other he determined to march to Pateeta. Major Crabb commenced his march at about eleven o'clock at night, and Major Popham at three on the following morning, as the object of Major Crabb's attack was at a much greater distance than that of Major Popham. When the latter arrived at Pateeta, he found the works considerably stronger than he had calculated. He attempted to make a breach with two battering cannon, but without effect, and fearing that any prolonged delay might frustrate the success of Major Crabb's attack, by giving the enemy time to send succours, he determined to storm at once. This was done on the 20th September, and the fortress won with very little opposition. The siege lasted six days; of the besieging party eleven only were killed and ten wounded. The besieged suffered a much more severe loss, though still upon the whole the carnage was inconsiderable.

Major Crabb was equally successful on his part. He arrived without molestation at a small village

near the pass, where he found a large body of men, with three guns, which were tolerably well served; and this was generally the case wherever the enemy employed cannon. These three guns pointed directly upon the path by which alone he could reach the pass. He advanced rapidly, keeping up a brisk fire, which was fearlessly and smartly returned. The enemy contested the position bravely, and were not defeated until they had sustained too severe a loss to continue the conflict with any chance of repelling their adversaries. They fled through the pass to Lutteefpoor, having killed twelve of Major Crabb's division and wounded twenty-two, which showed that they had not relinquished their position without a struggle. The victors followed upon the heels of the vanquished, and without further opposition reached the head of the pass, where they encamped for the rest of the day, having succeeded beyond expectation in an enterprise which threatened considerable difficulty and danger.

The news of these sudden and unexpected losses so alarmed the Rajah, that he already began to think of providing for his own personal safety. The fears of the fugitives magnified the number of the Government forces, or else the shame of having sustained such a signal defeat inducing them to make a false representation, Cheit Singh began, for the first time, to apprehend that, in spite of his immense treasure, the bravery of his troops, and the fidelity of his subjects, he was likely again to become a vassal to the Company whose dominion he had so unsuccessfully endeavoured to overthrow, and to suffer

most probably a heavy fine, if not a rigid incarceration for his unwarrantable contumacy and rebellion. In calculating the probable proceedings of his adversaries, he had directed his whole attention to the hostile movements which, from what had already taken place, he contemplated would be made in his front, and against which he had, as he imagined, taken the most prudent precautions which his circumstances would admit. He never dreamed of an attack in his rear, as he conceived the pass to be utterly unknown to the enemy, and very naturally imagined that the whole weight of their operations would be employed in securing the repossession of the capital which had generally declared against them, and that any attempt upon the stronghold to which he had retired would be deferred until more efficient means of attack, if these were attainable, should be secured.

The information that the pass behind Lutteefpoor, which was in fact the key to the whole province, had been gained, came like a thunderbolt upon the unsuspecting Rajah, who had begun to calculate, in the security of a flattering success, upon speedy independence and a much larger extent of dominion than he had hitherto enjoyed; but he was soon doomed to witness the fallacy of human expectation. Seeing all his hopes so suddenly annihilated, and reflecting with bitter disappointment upon the truly dangerous position in which he now stood, he resolved upon instant flight, as the only means left of securing his personal safety. He made up his mind to proceed immediately to Bidzee Gur. This was his last place of refuge on account of its extraordinary strength, and



of its being the depository of all his treasures; but as the direct road to it lay through the pass which was now in possession of his enemies, he was obliged to proceed by a more circuitous route, and, leaving Lutteefpoor early in the afternoon with a few followers,—how unlike his late flight from Benares!—he, unsuspected by his foes, took a long sweep over the hills to the high road, several miles beyond the pass, and then made the best of his way to the hill-fort where all his money was deposited, together with his last hopes of security; and where, from the impregnable construction and situation of this stronghold, he imagined he might at least find a secure refuge for the present. During his rapid flight he was perpetually haunted by the dread of a pursuing enemy, which was aggravated by the apprehension of a speedy and signal retribution.

The fort of Bidzee Gur is situated upon a lofty hill about sixty miles south-west of Benares. The approach to it from that city is across an extensive plain. A broad rapid stream of water passes the base of the hill, over which there is a massy stone bridge with eleven arches; these arches are high and narrow, terminating in a central point like the gothic arch. Between each there is a stone buttress, projecting about four feet from the wall, and presenting the acute edge of its triangular surface to the stream, thus acting as a breakwater during the periodical storms, when the river is swollen by the rains and agitated by the tempest. This bridge is a remarkably beautiful piece of masonry. The entrance is protected by a massy and lofty gateway

flanked by a circular bastion on either side, and surmounted by a thick wall, within which there is a communication between the bastions, which are each capable of containing a small number of troops. There is a wall on both sides of the road extending a considerable distance from the gateway, which was always vigilantly guarded during the time this stronghold was in the possession of Cheit Singh. This place had been long held to be impregnable by the native princes, who had yet to learn what might be done by British skill and perseverance, but they were soon satisfied of their mistake when they saw it finally fall an easy prey to the discipline and valour of the sepoy troops

The fort itself is inconsiderable, being small but uncommonly strong. It is built upon the very top of the hill, and is scarcely seen from the bridge, being partly concealed by the irregular termination of the mountain, which is lofty and precipitous. There is only one path by which the fort is to be approached, and this is so narrow as barely to admit of two persons advancing abreast, and in parts so steep that a very small number of troops might defend it against a host. In spite, however, of all these natural securities, the rebellious Rajah was finally obliged to abandon it, together with part of his treasure. So great indeed was his terror at the splendid results of British prowess already displayed, that he no longer considered himself secure even in a place that might have defied the utmost resources of human ingenuity and valour, had it only been defended with common

resolution. It was well supplied with water, and, as the number of troops required to make up the complement of the garrison was small, there was always a large stock of provisions laid up against an emergency, so that the means of resistance might be almost said to have been unlimited.

After Cheit Singh had fled to Bidzee Gur, he was soon apprised of the lukewarmness of the native princes in his cause, and of the disinclination on the part of his troops to continue longer in the service of a man whose fortunes appeared to be already desperate. So complete had been the panic among his raw militia, by the unexpected capture of Pateeta and the pass behind Lutteefpoor, that the whole of them, to a man, disbanded and fled to their homes. So general indeed was the consternation, that Sutteesgur, a fort a few miles from Lutteefpoor, together with the palace of Ramnagur, were abandoned the same evening, and the whole country was as completely restored in a few hours from a state of the most confirmed revolt to that of the most perfect allegiance, as if the rough aspect of war had never disturbed the ordinary serenity of its repose. On the morning after Major Crabb had secured the pass behind Lutteefpoor, he proceeded to that fortress with a determination to compel its surrender, when, to his surprise and mortification, he found it abandoned. He had not calculated upon such an utter want of spirit on the part of the rebel Zemeendar, but rather expected that he would at least have made something like an energetic resistance before submitting to be driven to his last resource;

contrary, therefore, to Major Crabb's expectation, he obtained possession of the strong fortress of Lutteefpoor without firing a shot.

Upon ascertaining the successful issue of this double enterprize, Mr. Hastings repaired without delay to Benares, where he found every thing as quiet as if the sound of insurrection had reached no mortal ear within the sacred precincts of that venerated capital. A proclamation was immediately issued offering a general pardon and oblivion of the past, excepting only the Rajah and his brother, whose rebellion, aggravated by their wanton cruelties, precluded them from that lenity which the Governor was not only willing but anxious to extend to their misguided subjects. A town in which two soldiers of Major Crabb's detachment had been inhumanly butchered was also excepted in the general amnesty declared in the proclamation, and razed to the ground:—a signal but just retribution, because the butchery of the two soldiers was an act of popular ferocity in which the whole population concurred.

On the return of Mr. Hastings to Benares, he immediately settled the succession to the Zemeendary, now vacant by the rebellion and voluntary abdication of Cheit Singh, who had thus doubly forfeited his title. The Governor-General, with a sense of justice which characterized every act of his administration, however this may have been denied by his detractors, bestowed the vacant Zemeendary upon a first cousin of the deposed Rajah, a grandson of Bulwunt Singh's by a daughter, which arrangement gave general satisfaction to the family, and by which a faithful

vassal and a useful ally was at once secured to the Company. Mr. Hastings considered it prudent to establish a distinct and independent magistracy in the city of Benares, the reasons of which are stated by him at length in a letter to the board at Calcutta respecting "the better protection of the city and district of Benares."

"Whereas the town of Benares is and has been for many years past totally deficient in every essential regulation usually established in all populous places for the maintenance of peace and the security of the persons and property of the inhabitants: and whereas the said place is the fixed residence and occasional resort of persons of all religions from every part of Hindostan and the Deccan, and in effect rather the capital seat of the religion of the Hindoos than of the territory to which it immediately appertains, and from that consideration demands a more immediate protection and attention from the powers of Government:"—for these reasons Mr. Hastings judged it necessary to establish a new police and courts of justice, all admirably constituted, and exhibiting most triumphantly his profound sagacity as a legislator. These wise regulations, which he considered it expedient to adopt, and which, as the result has sufficiently shown, have rendered Benares the best regulated and most orderly city in Hindostan, are detailed in the letter already referred to.

After the capture of Pateeta and Lutteefpoor, Major Popham lost not a moment in pursuing to Bidzee Gur the fugitive Rajah, who had by this time abandoned all thoughts of safety in the vicinity of an

active enemy, hoping to obtain possession at once of his person and of his vast wealth, which latter would have been a desirable acquisition in the present exhausted state of the Company's treasury. Cheit Singh, however, had become so fully sensible of the uncertain issue of all warlike enterprizes, that he resolved to put nothing further to the hazard, and therefore quitted this fortress reputed to be impregnable, and whose strength he had so frequently boasted might defy all "appliances and means to boot" which human ingenuity could devise to reduce it; so that Major Popham found it deserted upon his arrival, except by a few half-starved soldiers, worse than the very worst sample that could have been selected from Falstaff's ragged troop, who scarcely offered any resistance, and who, but for the natural, as well as artificial strength of the place, could not have held out a single hour against native valour combined with British discipline.

Although the flight of the ex-Zemeendar was somewhat precipitate, he nevertheless had the precaution to take with him the best part of his treasure. All his elephants were loaded with as much as they could carry, and as their burthens consisted almost entirely of gold and jewels, it was impossible to ascertain the amount which they bore away. The Rajah appeared to be a vast deal more solicitous about his treasures than about his family; for his wife, his mother, and all his female relations were left behind him at the mercy of his enemies, who, happily for the prisoners, were of a more generous spirit than their natural but cowardly protector. When Major Popham took pos-

session of the stronghold which the rebel had so precipitately abandoned, he certainly calculated upon appropriating to the use of the Government a fund that would greatly relieve it from the embarrassment under which it had most grievously suffered for a considerable period; but, to his disappointment and mortification, every thing had been taken away except a sum of money and moveables, altogether amounting in value to about three hundred thousand pounds; and these had been left only because it was inconvenient to remove them.

Cheit Singh, upon quitting Bidzee Gur, proceeded to Panna, the capital of Bundelcund, plundering and levying contributions as he passed, wherever he could do so with impunity. He was secretly favoured by the Rajah of that country, who had previously professed to Mr. Hastings the most unqualified fealty, assuring him that he would not extend to the rebel any protection whatever.

The fortress of Bidzee Gur surrendered by capitulation on the 10th of November, within three months after the memorable insurrection at Benares. Major Popham had thus the enviable reputation of having reduced within the short space of a few weeks two of the strongest forts in Hindostan—forts which had been hitherto considered impregnable,—and this too with the loss of only about twenty men.

When the Governor-General had fully settled the succession of the Zemeendary at Benares, and established its magistracy, he returned to Calcutta.

CHAPTER XIV.

CHUNAR.—BANYAN-TREE.—MAHOMEDAN TOMBS.

From Benares we proceeded to Chunar, the fort to which Mr. Hastings retired after the insurrection of Cheit Singh in 1781. It is a strong fortress, built upon a vast rock of free-stone, higher than St. Paul's, rising abruptly from the plain and extending a good way into the river, of which the batteries completely command the navigation. No boat was at that time allowed to pass the fort without a strict examination, but of late years I believe this rigid scrutiny has been discontinued. The prospect from the summit of this fortified hill is very extensive, overlooking pernaps one of the best cultivated districts in India. The town presents nothing attractive to the traveller's eye, being composed of clusters of native huts and European bungalows, built without the slightest regard either to order or beauty. There is a cantonment for sepoys outside the fortress, which is fortified with walls and towers built successively one behind the other, so that at the time of Cheit Singh's rebellion it was considered a place of great strength. These sturdy walls and towers present a singular contrast to the mud hovels and frail thatched bungalows of the modern town. The place is excessively unhealthy

during certain months in the year, and has been the grave of a great number of Europeans. The rock reflects the sun's rays with an intensity scarcely supportable, and yet this dreadful spot has been assigned as a station for invalid pensioners; for what reason I cannot imagine, unless that it is the most convenient place that could have been selected to get rid of incumbrances.

Before we quitted Chunar, our dandies, who had kindled a fire on the bank of the river, were dressing their rice and curry, when, a small snake approaching the place where they were seated, one of them rose and despatched it with a piece of bamboo. It was about twenty-five inches long, entirely white, except the top of the head, which was a deep shining black. This particular species is called by the natives the outa snake. It is very rare, and of peculiar habits. These creatures always go in pairs, and it is remarkable that, if one is killed either by man or beast, the survivor will follow, until it is either destroyed, or obtains its revenge by biting the author of its bereavement. It has been known under such circumstances to keep up the pursuit with the most patient perseverance for upwards of three hundred miles. The little creature, whose mate was killed by one of our boatmen, was seen after we had pushed from the shore, gliding along the bank of the stream in a direct line with our boat, and when we reached Cawnpoor, there we found it ready to deal its vengeance upon the wanton destroyer of its conjugal felicity. It was despatched before it could put its evil intention into execution.

We had a favourable breeze all the way from Chunar to Cawnpoor, but we nevertheless did not reach the latter town without encountering sundry accidents, from which one is never entirely free in a budgerow upon the Ganges. The dandies seem to love accidents, as they cannot get on without them; they therefore look upon them as perfect matters of course. Several large boats were in company with us, and we had the selfish satisfaction of perceiving that we were by no means singular in our disasters, for they alike befel our companions. We passed a beautiful banyan tree, at a short distance from Mizapoor, under which, from the sanctity of the situation, a most excellent piece of sculpture had been originally fixed. Around this the tree had twisted its strong and sinewy arms, lifted it completely from the pedestal, and carried it up in its growth, throwing round it a frame formed by its own picturesque and convoluted branches; thus rendering it a natural curiosity well worth beholding. The effect was as singular as it was striking. The tree from which the accompanying engraving is taken, was a much finer specimen of this extraordinary production of the vegetable kingdom, than that to which I have just referred; it grew a few miles farther up the river. It had two stems of nearly equal circumference, forming a junction at the root, and from these stems there branched laterally two large arms, from which numerous strong fibres depended; these two arms throwing out horizontal shoots in all directions, and covering a prodigious space with thick and verdant foliage. The tree afforded daily shelter to men and cattle, to pilgrims and travellers, who at



times congregated in great numbers beneath its branches. It appeared to be in the full vigour of its maturity, as not a single portion of it had begun to decay.

As the banyan tree has always been an object of great interest to travellers, I shall make no apology for introducing a short account of it here. The boughs grow horizontally from the stem, and extend so far, that in the ordinary process of nature they would be unable to support themselves. To supply this support, small fibrous shoots fall perpendicularly from them, and take root as soon as they reach the ground, thus propping the parent bough, while the lateral branches continue to throw out new sprouts, from which other fibres drop, until, in the course of years, one tree forms a little forest. The perpendicular stems put forth no shoots, and vary in circumference from a few inches to eight or ten feet. Before they reach the ground they are very flexible, and seem to dangle from the parent boughs like short thick thongs. The leaves of the banyan tree are of an elliptical shape, smooth, crisp, and glossy. They are about the size of a lettuce-leaf, and grow in regular alternations on each side of the branch. The fruit, which adheres to the smaller twigs, has no stem; it is about the size of a hazel-nut and its colour a deep bright red. It is eaten by monkeys, paroquets and other birds, but is insipid, and therefore seldom made use of by natives, and never by Europeans, as an article of food. The seeds are said to pass through birds uninjured; on the contrary, their germinating properties are improved by the process. They are thus deposited in

various parts of the country, and frequently on buildings, where they take root, and by these means the tree becomes extensively propagated. It is held in great veneration by the Hindoos, and has been therefore confounded with the "ficus religiosa," a tree altogether different in its growth and properties.

The approach to Cawnpoor is exceedingly picturesque. Here is an immense variety of buildings, especially at Currah, which may be called the city of tombs. This was once the residence of the Mogul governor of the district. The tombs are really splendid, presenting an appearance of sepulchral magnificence, of which no one can form an adequate conception from the ideal associations of a European churchyard. Here the dead are deposited amid the splendours of earthly pomp, as if—so one is involuntarily tempted to think —they despaired of that glory which is prepared for the righteous hereafter in a world eternal; since the lives of Indian heroes present but few features of resemblance to the meek and lowly Christian for whom the heavenly inheritance is reserved. Here, amid those gorgeous pageantries, which pass away with the hour, they are borne to their last homes upon earth, and, surrounded by marble monuments ornamented with bold relief or more delicate tracery, sleep their long sleep of silence and of death. But does all this save them from the common heritage of mortality? In the grave, where is the distinction between regal and vulgar clay? "The worm feeds sweetly" upon all! What a lesson to human vanity!

It is usual to see Mahomedans, whose ancestors repose amid these costly memorials of departed great-

ness, walking at sunset among the tombs, meditating upon perhaps their own end in the silence and solemnity around them. I could not deny myself also the melancholy pleasure of wandering in this "place of graves." The sun had just sunk behind the horizon, and darkness was* rapidly casting her shadows alike over the splendid works of human ingenuity, and those of a higher artificer. The fox-bat bustled from his covert among the tombs, and, spreading his broad leathern wings upon the still calm air, disturbed the holy silence by the flutter of his featherless pinions as he sailed heavily along through the gathering gloom. The freshness of the evening was grateful after the action of a burning sun, and the perfect stillness around gave a tone to my reflections which was new to me, and which I was therefore glad to indulge. The Moslems left the cemetery as soon as the sun disappeared, so that I was left alone and in darkness. The shrill laugh-shriek of the jackal occasionally interrupted the silence only to make it the more solemn from the intense hush by which that nightly din was succeeded. I could not help reflecting with the poet that—

> "The very earth on which I trod once lived,"

and was nothing the worse for the reflection.

The military station at Cawnpoor extends several miles along the banks of the Ganges. Not far off are the ruins of a small pagoda, on the site of an ancient city, Kanouge, now "with the things beyond

* In the warmer latitudes there is scarcely any twilight, but darkness almost immediately succeeds the sun-set.

the flood," but once so populous and extensive, that it is said to have contained thirty thousand shops which sold betel alone, and the circumference of its walls is stated to have been a hundred miles. Nineveh, Babylon, and ancient Tyre, must have shrunk into insignificance by a comparison with this vast city and her swarming population ;—Rome and Carthage in the highest glory of their renown would have dwindled into a mere suburb when placed in contrast with this marvellous capital. Whether the account of its extent and numerous population be matter of fact or of fiction, there is no doubt that Kanouge was once a great city,

"Towering in its pride of strength,"

and whose walls and bulwarks were "glorious to behold." Many writers indeed contend for this being the celebrated Palibothra of antiquity, and it is certainly no improbable conjecture, though, among so many conflicting opinions, any attempt to fix the site of that once renowned capital is now quite hopeless. It is one of those secrets yet, and most likely never, to be resolved, over which time only accumulates doubts and difficulties. Speculation, however ingenious, can never realize the truth, which is hid in the impenetrable obscurity of ages; facts only can place it in indubitable reality before us, and these, at least upon this interesting subject of inquiry, are now lost to us for ever—they are buried in the mighty grave of the past.

Just before our arrival at Cawnpoor we witnessed one of those frightful acts of superstition for which the Hindoos are so remarkable, perhaps above any

other people upon earth, and which are an indication of that repulsive heartlessness so common to this 'placid and gentle' race,—for these are the terms by which they have been frequently though falsely characterized. We saw a group of persons slowly approaching the river, bearing a heavy burden, which proved to be a human body, apparently in the last stage of existence; still it was sufficiently manifest that some time must elapse before life, in the ordinary course of nature, would become extinct. As our boat was close to the shore, I could see the miserable victim occasionally move his limbs, and could even hear him speak. He was extended upon a rude frame of matting, stretched over four bamboos, little exceeding the length and breadth of the body which lay upon it, and was placed close to the water's edge, in order that his last sigh might expire upon the banks of the sacred river. He was accompanied, as we soon learnt, by his nearest of kin, who looked on with the greatest indifference whilst the last rites of a most revolting sacrifice were about to be performed, and when all was prepared, eagerly participated in the ceremony that immediately followed. The frame upon which the dying man lay was placed so near the stream that the body was washed by every ripple of the water, so that the least push would launch it upon its placid bosom. The mouth and nostrils of the passive sufferer were now crammed with the consecrated mud of the Ganges, and this last act of kindred humanity was the consummation of a holy rite, which was to secure to the happy soul of the now departing saint a passport to the realms of everlasting bliss, by ob-

taining for it the enviable privilege of dismissal from its carnal prison-house on the banks of those waters which are reverenced, according to the belief of all pious Hindoos, even by the gods.

The dying man, under the delusions of his besotted creed, submitted without the slightest resistance or impatience to the dreadful ceremony of mud-suffocation, though it is possible he might have been passive rather from physical incapacity than from actual indifference; nevertheless, it was evident, from the occasional motion of his body, that he was still alive. When the whole funeral ceremony had been performed, the poor wretch was left to the mercy of the stream and of the jackals, which latter frequently attack these unhappy sufferers before life is extinct. In the present instance, we had an opportunity of witnessing one of those horrible contingencies to which the expiring Hindoo is occasionally exposed, when left to pour out his last sigh upon the hallowed banks of the Ganges. Shortly after the still living body had been abandoned by the humane relatives, we saw several Pariah dogs approach it; one of them seized a foot, another a hand, and began to tug, and did not cease until we scared them from their prey, to which they no doubt soon returned when they no longer found any interruption to their horrible carnival.

Upon these occasions, as soon as the friends are satisfied that the object of their spiritual concern is actually dead—nay, but too often even before exanimation has taken place—they push the frail frame upon which he is extended from the bank, committing it with pious resignation to the sacred waters;

and thus it frequently happens that numbers of dead bodies are seen floating down the Ganges in the course of a day, with birds of prey perched upon them, glutting their foul appetites, with all the ravenous eagerness of their nature, on those unsightly relics of mortality. How did my soul sicken at the sight, when, day after day, these frightful objects were forced upon my view, our budgerow every now and then coming in most unwelcome contact with

> " A carcass
> Now fall'n into disgrace, that in the nostril
> Smelt horrible."

Human bodies are seen at all times of the year floating down the Ganges in every state of decay, exhaling the foul steams of putrefaction, and thus loading the quiet air with the seeds of pestilence. They are looked upon by the natives with what among some may pass for philosophic indifference, but in my perhaps less intellectual view of the matter, with a most bestial apathy. I could not help regarding with a feeling of disgust the heartless manner in which the boatmen plunged their oars into those lifeless frames that had so lately been animated by an immortal spirit, in order to prevent their contact with our budgerow; there was no expression of sympathy in their dark and rigid lineaments—they seemed to look upon every deformed relic of a brief existence which floated down the lazy current as

> " A carrion-death, within whose empty eye "

there was nothing either to excite human emotion or to arrest one sad reflection. I have never forgotten

the impressions stamped upon my mind by these repeated mementoes of life's uncertainty and of death's assurance;—it was in truth an awful lesson!

From Cawnpoor we made the best of our way to Futtypoor, and thence across to Agra, which was raised by Akbar from an inconsiderable village to be the capital of the province, and had the honour of being the birth-place of Abu Fazel, his prime minister, perhaps the most distinguished man of his age. During the life of that emperor, to whom it owes its present magnificence and importance, it was the seat of the Mahomedan government. It is further memorable as having been the prison of the sanguinary Shah Jehan. This tyrant was destined both to witness and to feel the rod of retribution wielded by his politic but unprincipled son, who doomed him to perpetual imprisonment, a punishment far less than he deserved, when we consider the atrocious murders by which he had originally secured his succession to the throne of his father Jehangire. Though imprisoned in the city of Agra, this ruthless fratricide, who had assumed the vain title of Sovereign of the World, which is the literal interpretation of Shah Jehan, lived in splendour and died in ignominy. That city, which had been the pride of his grandfather, the celebrated Akbar, was the scene both of his own magnificence and disgrace; he indeed, following the example of his renowned ancestor, adorned it considerably during his life, as if to render it but the more striking memorial of his death. That body which contained, during the brief term of its mortal pilgrimage, a soul polluted with the foulest crimes, now reposes amid the splendours of perhaps the

most magnificent mausoleum upon earth. Can we wonder that a wicked father should have been the parent of an equally wicked son? We cannot be surprized that the tyrant Aurungzebe inherited with the blood the vices of the tyrant, Shah Jehan—the sanguinary offspring of a sanguinary parent—for Aurungzebe, too, was a fratricide.

Near the city of Agra is the celebrated Taje Mahal, a tomb erected by the father of Aurungzebe to the memory of his lovely and beloved Sultana, Arjemund Banu. It is said to have cost upwards of eight hundred thousand pounds sterling, an amazing sum, if we consider that in India money will go at least five times as far as in Europe; and if we further consider the value of money early in the seventeenth century, when that splendid pile was erected, this sum will be found to have been equal at least to three or four millions with us now. Labour is always uncommonly cheap in India, so that I am sure I have rather underrated than exceeded the relative cost. The tomb is said to have been twenty years and fourteen days in erecting; but the expense did not fall heavily on the emperor, if it be true that he compelled his conquered foes to send all the materials which they were able to supply, and for which of course their conqueror did not think it necessary to pay. No man was so likely to have made such a cruel exaction as the tyrant Shah Jehan.

The first sight of the Taje is highly imposing; the edifice is constructed entirely of white marble, and, standing as it does upon a vast plain, under a vertical sun, the reflections are so vivid, that the shadows pro-

jected from the building are extremely faint, and therefore the less picturesque, if broad and massy effects, which I am disposed to doubt, are positively essential to the picturesque. I would remark here, that no one can form a just idea of an Oriental landscape, or of the peculiar effect of light and shade under a tropical sun, from a view in Europe. The forcible contrasts of light and shadow which are considered so attractive in the engravings made after the beautiful designs of our best living artists, will vainly be looked for in India. Nature there presents no such direct opposition; she thróws one solemn tone of grandeur over the whole scene, except in the hilly country, where the aspect of her general features is entirely changed.*

This splendid mausoleum, enclosing the remains of a sanguinary tyrant and his queen, is situated upon the banks of the Jumna, which flows majestically beneath its lofty minars; of these there are four: one at each corner of the quadrangle in which this incomparable structure stands. The quadrangle is one hundred and ninety yards square, and the dome which rises from the centre of the building is about seventy feet in diameter. The outer wall, within which this monumental pile is enclosed, is upwards of sixty feet high, and composed of plain red stone. In this wall there is a very unimposing gateway, through which the visiter passes to one composed of black and

* It has been the object of the artist, in the pictorial subjects that embellish this volume, to give exact portraits of the scenes which his pencil has portrayed, and I am satisfied that no one who has been in India will deny the faithfulness of these representations.

white marble, closed by a huge pair of brazen gates, and surmounted by several magnificent domes. Through this portal you enter the gardens, and here bursts at once upon the view, in all its unrivalled grandeur, an edifice perhaps altogether unparalleled among the works of human ingenuity. "Stretched upon an immense basement forty feet high and nine hundred in length, its prodigious mass of polished marble rises proudly over a river that not only adds to its majesty, but by reflection multiplies its splendour: in truth, exclusive of its magnitude, extent, and variety, whatever may be our architectural predilections, we are overwhelmed with its effect, and compelled to acknowledge it a most extraordinary assemblage of beauty and magnificence."* "All those parts of the building which appear white are of marble, brought by land-carriage from Kandahar, a distance of nearly six hundred miles; those which are red are composed of a stone obtained from the neighbouring Mewat hills."†

This incomparable structure has been often and variously described, but never yet has any adequate conception of it been conveyed. The principal dome was originally surmounted by a golden spire and crescent, which were stolen by the Mahrattas, and have been replaced by a substitute less attractive to those daring marauders, being now composed of baser metal gilt. This ornament rises thirty feet

* Oriental Scenery, by Thomas and William Daniell. In this work, these distinguished artists have given by far the most accurate description of the Taje Mahal which I have anywhere met with.

† Oriental Scenery.

above the dome, forming an agreeable and striking contrast to the four stately pillars which, with a solemn but sublime grandeur, rear their polished shafts at the several corners of the quadrangle. They are composed entirely of white marble, and their spotless surfaces, reflecting the vivid rays of a tropical sun, but at the same time subduing their intensity, exhibit a sober stateliness of effect only to be felt and understood by those who have witnessed it. These minars are about one hundred and fifty feet high, but considerably slighter than the Monument near London Bridge.

The gardens which surround this marvellous work of art are beautifully laid out with plantations of vines and peach-trees, and from the centre of this terrestrial paradise rises in all its prodigious magnificence the mausoleum of Mumtâza Zemâni,* the once beautiful wife of the emperor, as that name implies. The ascent to it from the gardens is by a flight of solid marble steps, terminating in an extensive terrace. Crossing this terrace, you reach the door of the tomb, which is small and unimposing, presenting an humble contrast to the surrounding objects, as if to forewarn the visiter that he is about to enter the melancholy repository of the dead. Upon entering this costly receptacle of regal dust, which was thought too peerless to mix with vulgar clay, reflections on the vanity of all earthly grandeur almost instantly absorb the mind, in spite of the splendours that everywhere attract and dazzle the astonished beholder. In the centre of the mausoleum stand the tombs of

* This was a name given by Shan Jehan to his favourite Sultana Arjemund Banu.

the founder and his empress, the one celebrated for his tyranny, the other no less celebrated for her beauty. They are both enclosed by a skreen of exquisite workmanship, formerly composed of jasper but now of marble, the more costly material having been pillaged by the Mahrattas. On the right is the tomb of the empress, for the especial reception of whose body this remarkable edifice was erected, and on the left that of the emperor. They are both covered with tracery and mosaic most elaborately wrought, and the shades and colours of the flowers, which are represented in almost endless profusion by different kinds of the inferior gems, are so true to nature that the eye is completely imposed upon by the resemblance. So minute and elaborate are some of the ornaments that the mosaic of a single flower is frequently composed of several dozen pieces of coloured stones. The astonishment which this wonderful production of art excites is acknowledged by every visiter. I have never met with a person who had seen the Taje, that has not admitted how very far it transcended the expectations that had been formed of it, however highly these may have been previously raised.

Had Shah Jehan survived his imprisonment by his son, the wily Aurungzebe, or rather, had he not been deposed by him, it is said to have been his intention to erect an edifice precisely similar to the Taje, for the reception of his own remains, and to connect the two by a bridge of white marble. If this stupendous plan had been executed, it would have formed at once a prodigy of human art and human vanity. The waters of the Jumna are already immortalized

in time ;. but what a splendid ray of glory would this have added to their earthly immortality !

A great many depredations have been committed on the Taje Mahal at different times by the predatory Mahrattas and the Jauts, who had possession of Agra for a considerable period. They removed the brazen gates of the city, as well as the golden spire and other costly portions of the mausoleum. These have been in some measure, though very imperfectly, restored by the munificence of the East India Company, who, up to the year 1814, had expended above a lac of rupees, or twelve thousand pounds sterling, in effecting this object ; but, as Mr. Hamilton truly says, " in India, owing to the nature of the climate, the luxuriant vegetation, and other causes, undertakings of this sort may be described as never ending, still beginning."

CHAPTER XV.

AGRA.—CAPARISONED ELEPHANT.—CAMEL.

We spent some time at Agra, as there is much to be seen in the city and neighbourhood well worthy of observation. The fort, which was one of the noble works of the Emperor Akbar, is large, and contains many beautiful edifices, memorials at once of his taste and magnificence. It is built of stone, extremely hard and of the colour of jasper. In the fort, when it surrendered to Lord Lake in 1803, there was a cannon of prodigious dimensions, its length being fourteen feet, its diameter four, and the calibre two. It carried a cast iron ball of fifteen hundred pounds weight. Lord Lake endeavoured to convey it down the Ganges to Calcutta upon a raft, but it broke through the frame, and sank into the sands of the river. The city stands on the south-west side of the Jumna. The houses are lofty, and some of the streets so narrow as not to afford space for more than two passengers to walk abreast. An elephant could not pass through many of them. Much the greater part of this once regal city is in so ruinous a state as to be almost uninhabited. The country about Agra is flat, but studded with the grandest remains of antiquity; and it is frequently a

melancholy sight to see cattle stalled under the sheltering walls of some splendid ruin which had once perhaps been the pride of kings, the sanctuary of a nation's idolatry, or the birth-place of heroes. The Mootee Musjid, a noble mosque within the fort, is said to have been built with the marble that was left after the completion of the Taje Mahal.

Cremation is known to be the general mode of disposing of the dead in the East, but it is not the universal mode, and though inhumation is rare, we had an opportunity of witnessing this method of sepulture during our stay at Agra. The funeral took place at a village a few miles from the city. The sect who prefer interment to burning their dead are Hindoo worshippers of Siva, and their plan of burial, as it is of rather rare occurrence in India, for the sect is not numerous, may therefore prove interesting even to Anglo-Indian readers. When the body is properly prepared for the grave, it is placed in a sitting posture upon a kind of bier, borne upon the shoulders of four men. The corpse has no shroud, but is as it came into the world, naked, except the head, round which a large turban is carefully bound covered with flowers. The body is thickly sprinkled with wood-ashes, and thus opposed in striking contrast with the bright flowers which adorn the head, appears perfectly hideous. The friends and relations of the deceased assemble and form a funeral procession, following the bier with tomtoms, trumpets, and other instruments of din and discord, at the same time pealing their yells and lamentations to the very skies, and sending forth such "a multifarious din," as would awake from any

sleep but that of death. As the bearers advance, the dead man

> "Moves and nods his head;
> But the motion comes from the bearers' tread,
> As the body borne aloft in state,
> Sways with the impulse of its own dead weight."*

As the procession moves onward, the relatives of the deceased occasionally stop and kiss the body, and then renew their uproar with tenfold energy. Upon reaching the place of sepulture, the din ceases while the corpse is prepared for the last offices of kindred devotion. The grave is constructed by sinking a hole in the earth, about five feet deep and three wide, which is the entrance to a lateral chamber cut from the bottom of the cavity with which it forms a right angle. In this chamber the body is carefully placed in the same erect posture in which it was brought to this last abode of its mortality. As soon as it is deposited in that narrow dwelling where the supremacy of death is so awfully recognized, the consecrated rice and sacred water from the Ganges—which, like the widow's barrel of meal and cruise of oil, are supposed to be inconsumable—are placed before it, each in a small earthen vessel, in order that the corpse may be sustained with food proper for its nourishment in its state of separation from the living, until the dominion of death and time shall cease, and "life and immortality be brought to light." Before the interment, the well-known mark of the deceased's caste is carefully painted upon his forehead, in order that Siva may distinguish a true worshipper among those

* Curse of Kehama.

countless multitudes which the grave shall cast forth at the final gathering, when they of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, shall stand before the everlasting presence, to hear the doom of their eternity.

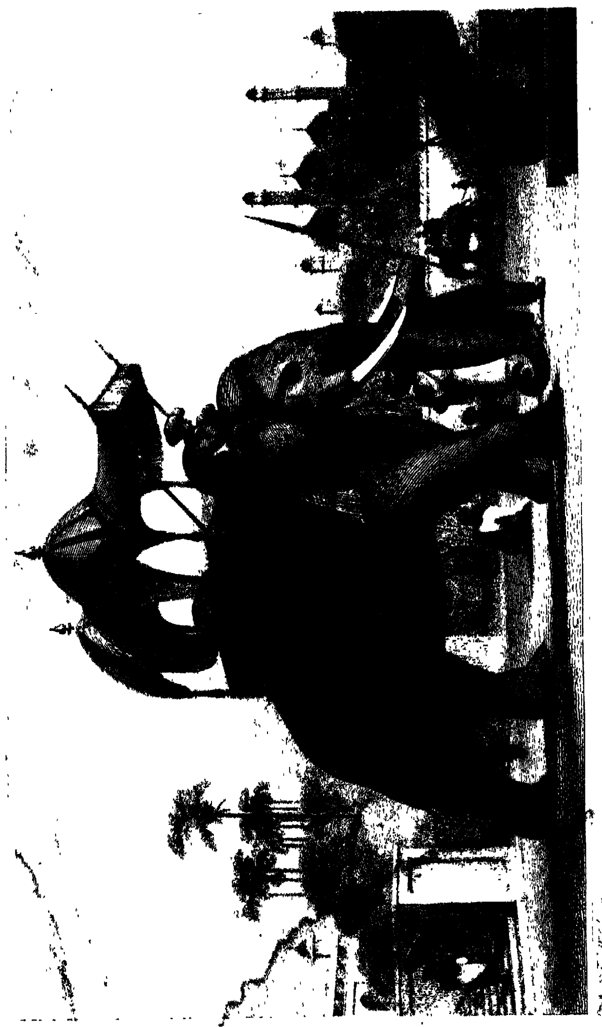
As soon as the body has been carefully laid in the "house appointed for all living," the priest makes an oration, adorned with every exaggeration of Eastern hyperbole, in which he retraces the past life of his departed brother, recounting the good actions and manifold virtues of a man tinged perhaps with crimes of the blackest dye—for this is not at all uncommon—thus showing how worthy he was of the divine honours to which he has been called, and giving the surviving relatives the easy assurance of a similar condition hereafter upon the most satisfactory terms. At the conclusion of the priest's rhapsody, a sort of dirge is chanted, in which all the assembly vociferously join, mixed with the din of tomtoms, the braying of trumpets, and the yells of mourners; then the perpendicular hole is filled with branches of the banyan-tree and a blessing pronounced by the officiating Bramin over the corpse, which is solemnly recommended to the guardianship of Siva. The grave is finally closed up with earth, when the ceremony concludes with a feast provided only for a certain number specially invited to partake of it, who, however, dare not presume to dip their unsanctified fingers into the mess, until the Bramin has first satisfied the longings of an unappeased appetite, and received his burial fee from the relatives of the deceased.

It happened, while we were at Agra, that the celebrated Scindia, who has proved one of the most for-

midable adversaries with whom the British forces in India have ever had to contend, passed near the city, with an escort of at least thirty thousand troops and two thousand elephants. He was grand nephew to Mahadajee Scindia, being the grandson of his younger brother, and, though in every respect inferior to his uncle both as a warrior and a statesman, he has nevertheless shown himself to be a vigilant and enterprising enemy. We were attracted to the spot to see the Mahratta chieftain and his followers, and the sight was in truth a very splendid one. The troops consisted entirely of cavalry variously armed and clad. Some had on quilted tunics, which were of a texture sufficiently strong to afford a successful resistance to the stroke of a sabre, and frequently to the thrust of a spear. Some were cased in a light coat of chain-armour without any helmet; some were but partially accoutred, having on merely a cuirass; others again had only greaves, while their bodies were perfectly unprotected. In fact, it appeared as if they had divided a few suits of armour among them, and arrayed themselves in whatever portion had chanced to fall to their lot. Their arms were principally a sword, a matchlock, and a dagger. Their skill in equitation was surprising. They would occasionally urge their horses forward, and when at their utmost speed stop them in an instant within three feet of the terrified spectators. The perfect mastery which they have over their steeds is astonishing: they seem to be part of the animal. An instance of their being thrown rarely if ever happens; and yet some of their horses are the most vicious in the universe. The

sight of the elephants was truly grand, such a concourse of them being seldom witnessed. Their extreme docility, combined with the consciousness of their amazing strength, is no less remarkable than their sagacity. Some of them were splendidly caparisoned, especially that upon which the Mahratta chief himself rode. It was a noble animal, upwards of ten feet high, of a light colour, and very robust. The tusks were ornamented with gold and silver rings of considerable value, and the housings were of rich gold tissue. A large portion of the howdah was reported to be of rock crystal, which glittered in the sun, and multiplied its rays in ten thousand dazzling reflections.

The elephant of India is stated to be considerably less both in height and size than that of Africa. Travellers have represented the latter as occasionally attaining the height of sixteen feet, and Major Denham has sanctioned this statement by conjecturing that several enormous creatures which he saw during his travels in Africa, could not be less than sixteen feet high, although one which he actually had the opportunity of measuring, only reached to the height of twelve feet six inches; and this is in truth sufficiently prodigious, when its immense bulk is considered. The result of this admeasurement might have satisfied him that his judgment of the animals which he did not measure had more than probably added three feet to their actual height. A large Indian elephant, which seldom exceeds ten feet in stature, attains sometimes to the weight of seven thousand pounds. The animal represented in the opposite page belonged



to a British officer, and was the finest I have ever seen in India, insomuch that Mr. Daniell thought it a subject worthy of his pencil. It was purchased for four thousand rupees, or about four hundred pounds sterling. The caparisoned elephant, and this was one, appears perfectly conscious of its superiority over the baggage elephant. It seems to treat its inferior as a beast of burden, eyeing it, upon a close proximity, with a look of most ineffable disdain; never condescending to be sociable with it, but generally manifesting uneasiness when they happen to be placed in casual juxtaposition.

The caparisoned elephant has a most imposing appearance when furnished with its housings, which are sometimes very magnificent, and its broad back surmounted by the stately howdah, in which the rider is seated in sumptuous ease under one canopy, while his servant occupies a seat under another; the Mahoot or conductor bestriding the animal's neck, armed with an instrument like a boat-hook to goad it into speed or restrain it, as occasion may require. The ladder is a necessary appendage to its furniture, and is always drawn up and fastened on the elephant's left side after the parties have mounted; for although the submissive creature falls down upon its belly, with its fore and hind legs projected, in order to facilitate the ascent of its riders, still, without the ladder, to mount its lofty back would be altogether impracticable.

The ordinary pace of these animals is from five to six miles an hour, though upon occasions they have been known to travel at the rate of between twelve

and fourteen. Their dislike to persons on horseback is extreme, and they are particularly annoyed by the rattle of military trappings in their rear. Of this peculiarity in their temperament, a remarkable instance was related to me by the owner of the animal represented in the engraving.

Shortly after his arrival in India, he mounted an elephant for the purpose of ascertaining how far such a method of travelling might be agreeable. He was placed upon the common seat with which the sagacious beast, when not properly caparisoned, is furnished. It is a mere semicircular bench with a low back. An officer was in his rear on horseback, encumbered with his military trappings, his sword hanging and rattling against the horse's side at every step of his progress. The elephant, upon hearing the unwelcome sound, began to increase its speed, which put the rider to considerable inconvenience, as he had some difficulty in keeping his seat. The officer, enjoying the joke, followed the elephant, keeping close at its heels, and maliciously adding to the rattling of his trappings by striking his whip occasionally against the saddle. The vast creature, which by this time had become greatly excited by the annoyance of an unwelcome companion, plunged at once from a rough trot into a rougher gallop, which so completely upset the equilibrium of the rider, that he was obliged to cling to the seat with all his strength, in order to prevent the chance of being precipitated from his fearful elevation. The jeopardy in which he was so unexpectedly placed continued for one hour, the horse and elephant being almost at full speed during the whole time, when it appeared that they

had covered a distance of nearly fourteen miles. The Mahoot had been afraid to stop the animal's speed lest a sudden check should have thrown it down, which would not only have endangered its life, but likewise the lives of those who were upon its back.

The elephant is remarkably surefooted, seldom stumbling, and much more rarely falling; this is evidently a wise provision of Providence, as the fall of such a huge body could not take place without mischief. It has an invincible antipathy to the camel, and is always very fidgety whenever the latter happens to be picketed near it.*

The Hirkarrah camel is, next to the elephant, perhaps the most useful animal in the East, and for general purposes even exceeds the latter in utility. It is capable of travelling a considerable distance in the course of the day: its progress is slow but regular, and it will continue the same speed for a great number of hours, under the most ardent sun, scarcely

* In the account of the group of wild elephants which we saw in the Dindegul district, I omitted to state that the females are always, or, at all events, generally without tusks. I mention this circumstance, as in all the encyclopædias to which I have referred, and in several works on natural history, I find the female described as having tusks, only somewhat smaller than the male. Cuvier also is of this opinion, but I can only say that I never remember to have seen a female elephant in India with tusks. She has two long blunt teeth situated exactly where the tusks are in the male, but, so far as I have observed, they are never used as weapons either of offence or defence, and never extend more than three or four inches beyond the lips. Cuvier says that some of the females have tusks, by which he would seem to imply that they generally have not; and I have certainly always heard those who have lived in the countries where these

exhibiting any symptoms of fatigue. Its ordinary pace is about two miles and a half an hour. The rider sits upon the camel's shoulders, or rather upon its hump, and guides it by a thick cord, passed through the fleshy part of its nose, just above the cartilage that separates the nostrils. It is generally perfectly tractable, and is subservient to the slightest motion of the cord by the driver. The camel of India has but one hump, and is in fact the dromedary of natural history, though it is universally known by the generic name of camel throughout the continent of Asia. The dromedary, which is really the animal I have been describing, has been declared by travellers to possess great speed, but this is quite a mistake; its movements are slow and extremely awkward, while the roughness of its pace is so distressing to the rider, that few of the natives who are daily upon its back live long. The camel, notwithstanding, may be said to be an expeditious traveller, especially in long journeys; not, however, in consequence of its speed, for in this

creatures abound, mention as a distinguishing feature of the female elephant that, like the wild sow, she has no tusks. Certain it is, that, in reading the account of the elephant as generally given, the impression would be, that the jaws of the female are commonly armed like those of the male. Now this is not true, as the former always has tusks when of a certain age, the latter not always,—a fact admitted by all naturalists. I take the truth to be, that female elephants have tusks, in about the same proportion as women have beards. Whether this be the case or not, I do not presume to decide against generally received authorities. The representation however in the plate to which I have alluded is sufficiently justified from the circumstance, that the animals there given were taken from the life, and were exactly as Mr. Daniell has represented them.

quality it is, as I have already stated, altogether deficient, but from the stamina which it possesses enabling it to proceed day after day, from morning until night, without failing in its strength.

This animal, though generally docile, is sometimes very irritable, and when once roused to fury is with difficulty appeased until it has had its revenge, which is occasionally fatal to the aggressor. I once witnessed an enraged camel seize with its teeth the arm of its driver, which it snapped in an instant, and it would have trodden the man to death had he not been rescued by some of his companions who happened to be upon the spot, and diverted the beast's attention from its victim. When, however, these creatures have once inflicted retribution, they are readily pacified, but not till then; so that when a camel has been enraged by its driver, the latter usually throws his turban and tunic upon the ground before it, when the angry beast tramples upon them, screaming and snorting with every demonstration of the most terrific rage, which however soon subsides, and the offender may again approach it with impunity.

The camel is endowed by nature in such a manner as strikingly to exhibit the providential mercy of the Creator. It is a native of those desert tracts where both water and pasture are precarious, and where neither is ever found in abundance, principally inhabiting Arabia Deserta and the central portions of Africa, where vast and trackless deserts stretch their inhospitable solitudes,—where neither dews fall nor rains freshen; and it is singularly provided against the austerities of the region in which it dwells. Its foot

is peculiarly constructed for the dry arenaceous surface over which it has to travel, being broad and flat, nearly round, without any division of toes, but having two horny projections in front, and the foot is so soft and flexible, that it dilates considerably when pressed upon the sandy soil of the desert, into which, in consequence of its structure, it does not sink.* Besides this, the camel has a most peculiar internal conformation, admirably adapted to the localities to which nature has confined it. In the stomach are a number of small compartments, in which the creature is enabled to lay up a store of water sufficient for a supply of many days, and these compartments are so constructed and located as to enable it to exhaust their contents singly. It uses this supply very sparingly, and with great caution, showing an instinctive providence against the saddest of casualties, truly wonderful. The large excrescence upon the back, which to the beholder's eye is a monstrous deformity, is nevertheless one of those admirable provisions of nature for which the camel is remarkable, perhaps, above all other ruminating animals. When it cannot for the moment

* When employed to travel in hilly countries, where the surface is rocky, or where it has been rendered slippery by rain, the camel is apt to fall, and its fall is invariably fatal. The legs slip laterally, when, especially if it is loaded, the ponderous body falls, the members dislocating and projecting horizontally from the shoulders and haunches, and so complete is the luxation, that the suffering animal can never be made to rise. Under such circumstances, it is immediately killed, not only in tender mercy, but probably more frequently for the sake of its hide and flesh, which latter is esteemed, particularly by the Arabs, as very delicate food.



meet with food, the fat of the hump supplies a nutriment which sustains it for many days without its suffering any diminution of vigour or of bulk, except in the hump, which gradually decreases, and if the abstinence last long, will disappear altogether, returning as soon as other aliment is supplied.

CHAPTER XVI.

RISE OF THE MAHRATTA POWER.—SEVAJEE.—SCINDIA.

THE portrait of the Mahratta chief which embellishes this volume is that of the celebrated Mahadajee Scindia, predecessor to the reigning prince. Mr. Daniell, shortly after his arrival in India, and not long before the death of the old warrior, had the honour of an interview, during which he was also honoured with an Oriental embrace. Availing himself of the opportunity, he made an admirable likeness of this remarkable man, of whom I shall do my best to give some account, the subject being new, and I trust not uninteresting, to the generality of English readers.

The rise of the Mahratta power in India was one of those sudden and surprising revolutions which, in the troubled current of political events, have been so frequently seen to spring from the reaction of despotism. The Mogul empire, under the able but despotic direction of Aurungzebe, extended over nearly the whole of India. The most fertile and populous provinces of Hindostan were subjected to the dominion of a tyrant, who nevertheless governed wisely, though he ruled despotically. The extensive plains of the Deccan and of Hindostan Proper, which are protected by that elevated chain of mountains, called the Ghauts, form-

ing a natural and almost impregnable barrier against irregular and undisciplined troops, was inhabited by a hardy and active race. They felt the galling yoke of a conqueror. They were encouraged to resistance by their distance from the capital of their despot, and by the natural barrier which, under judicious management and an enterprising leader, was considered as an almost certain protection against the inroads of an invading army. Besides this, the Mahomedan nations had been involved in such constant wars, and the successions of that mighty state were so continually disputed and so bloodily contested, that ample opportunities were afforded to a leader of a daring and comprehensive mind to assemble the disunited members of a vast and dislocated empire, at a distance from the seat of government, and establish them into an independent community upon the wreck of that power by which they had been subdued. Such a leader was Sevajee, the founder of the Mahratta dynasty, which finally became the most flourishing and formidable in Hindostan.

This hero was born in the year 1627, at Poonah, then a village, but afterwards the capital of the Mahratta empire. He was of noble descent, and great pains seem to have been taken in training him early to deeds of arms. He despised letters, but, devoting himself to military exercises, soon commenced that career of enterprise which distinguished him above all the heroes of his day. Before he was eighteen, he had collected together a band of the inhabitants of his native glens, and commenced the daring but inglorious profession of a robber. By degrees he became the

terror of the neighbouring princes, in whose territories his depredations were committed. From heading a few profligate adventurers, he rose to be the leader of a small but formidable army. Fortresses and cities submitted to his arms, and he finally became master of a considerable extent of territory, with an army of fifty thousand foot and seven thousand horse.

This prodigious and rapid accession of power alarmed the jealousy of Aurungzebe, who was by this time securely seated upon the throne of the Moguls and seemed resolved to extend his conquests to the very farthest limits of his means. He therefore sent a large body of troops under an experienced leader to crush the rising power of the Mahrattas, but the wary conduct of Sevajee, who was prolific in decoit* stratagems, baffled the military skill, and defeated the enterprises of the Mogul; after which the Mahratta chief entered the city of Surat and made himself master of treasure to the amount of a million sterling. The Mogul potentate was so exasperated at this daring act of aggression that he was determined to crush the audacious robber, and, sending a formidable army under an able and experienced leader, finally succeeded in making him prisoner. The Mahratta, however, soon contrived to effect his escape, and, recommencing his favourite mode of predatory warfare, extended his ravages to the walls of Surat, which he again plundered, and, finally assuming the ensigns of royalty, caused himself to be crowned, and de-

* Decoit gangs are organized bands of robbers, among the most remarkable of which are the Thuggs or Phansigars, of whom I hope to give some account in a future volume.

manded from his predatory followers the fealty of subjects.

Within three years after his coronation, he had made himself master of some of the strongest fortresses in the Carnatic, pushing his victories almost to the walls of Madras on the one side, and to those of Seringapatam on the other. He, however, suffered a signal defeat by the Mogul army, and was obliged to retreat to his capital, which he indeed reached in safety, but extreme fatigue, acting upon a constitution already broken by years of unremitting exertion, terminated his life at the age of fifty-three. He who began to shake off the yoke of subjection to a mighty empire, with a few bold but unprincipled adventurers, left behind him a principality which has survived that of the Moguls, once the most powerful and extensive in the Eastern world. He is among the most extraordinary of those heroes whom history celebrates as the founders of empires.

The rise and fall of states are the great moral phases in the revolution of ages, that produce so powerful an influence upon the vast political machine by which the civil and social condition of enlightened man is maintained and regulated. They often change the whole aspect of kingdoms, giving new features and new positions to society, and generally adding something to the aggregate stock of good, which, according to the dictates of a narrow philosophy, appears so frequently to arise out of evil. It is indeed curious to observe from what insignificant beginnings the most mighty empires have arisen, from the early Babylonian ascendancy to the most recent of

modern states. The Roman, which before its decline was pre-eminent among nations, standing like a mighty Colossus amid the sovereignties by which it was surrounded, owed its foundation to an outcast, whose very birth was at once a mystery and a reproach. He gathered within the rude walls of a hamlet a few vagabonds, who lived by robbing the honest community by whom they were discarded; and from this petty concourse of plunderers arose that vast empire which finally embraced under its dominion almost the whole civilized earth. Those walls over which the brother of the founder leaped in contempt, and for which he paid the forfeit of his life, became the nucleus of a city memorable in ancient times as the greatest capital in the world, and even now consecrated by associations which rank it as the first in renown, if not in splendour. The Mahratta power had a similar beginning to that founded by Romulus on the plains of Italy. Though less mighty, it has nevertheless based itself upon that of the Mogul, which, under the descendants of the house of Timur, rose to an eminence scarcely inferior to the ancient Roman. An adventurer and his predatory followers, few, indeed, but desperate, laid the foundation of a state which has long contested the supremacy of the British arms, and is at this moment the only power in India capable of disputing that supremacy. It has indeed lately declined, but its energies are by no means extinguished; they are still formidable, and likely to demand a vigorous resistance, whenever political oppression or personal ambition may call them into exercise.

The Mahratta power after the death of Sevajee gradually extended and rose upon the ruins of the Mogul to be the most formidable in Hindostan. Many distinguished warriors sprang up among this warlike people, on whom the mantle of Sevajee seems to have fallen; of these the family of Scindia was not the least conspicuous. The first of this family who distinguished himself was Ranojee Scindia, said originally to have held a very menial office in the household of the Paishwa, whose armies he afterwards commanded. It was in the degrading situation of a servant of the lowest order that he first fixed the notice of his master by his diligence and attention to his servile duties, and thus laid the foundation of his future greatness. The manner in which he then attracted the Paishwa's attention is stated to have been as follows. One day, as that prince was passing through one of the apartments of his palace, he discovered Ranojee asleep with his master's slippers clasped to his breast, and so tightly that the Paishwa tried in vain to remove them. Struck with his servant's extraordinary care of a charge so insignificant, the master wisely judged that he who had been so jealously careful of a trifle could not fail to prove faithful if intrusted with a charge of importance. He consequently took the first opportunity of appointing him to a station in his body-guard; nor did Ranojee disappoint the expectations of a generous master. From that period his rise was rapid: he became an enterprising soldier, and laid the foundation of his family's greatness.

He is said to have claimed descent from the tribe

of Rajpoots,* who are remarkable for the purity of their descent, though the low situation held by him in the household of the Paishwa would seem to warrant a doubt as to the truth of this claim. It frequently happens that persons of base origin, who elevate themselves to distinction in their generation, exhibit a tender anxiety to establish in their own persons the right of ancestral dignity, and it is probable that the Mahratta set up a claim to progenitorial honours which he could not substantiate, as it is difficult to conceive how the descendant of a Rajpoot family could have been in a situation so degrading to a high-born Indian as to be the slipper-carrier even of a Mahratta prince.

Ranojee first appeared as a distinguished leader of the Paishwa's army in 1738, when the cession of Malwa to that prince by the Mogul emperor led to the eventual establishment of the Mahratta states of Scindia, Holcar, and Puar. Most of the conquests of Hindostan by the Mahratta armies were held by Ranojee at his death, which happened about 1750.

Mahadajee Scindia was his fourth son and illegitimate; he succeeded to his father's possessions, upon the death of his brothers, who survived their parent only a few years, when Mahadajee was established in the full possession of those conquests which Ranojee held at his decease. He had distinguished himself as a brave and skilful leader in a despe-

* The reader will find some very interesting particulars of this high-born tribe, in Colonel Tod's Annals and Antiquities of RAJAST'HAN, a work of great research and containing vast information upon a subject hitherto little investigated.

rately fought battle near the town of Paniput, in which three of his brothers were slain, and he received so severe a wound in the knee from an Afghan battle-axe, that he was deprived for life of the use of his right leg. Thus when he found himself elevated to the dignity of a Mahratta prince, he was already known, not only as an enterprising but as an able commander.* His whole career was remarkable, and he was not less distinguished for the clear-sighted sagacity of his policy, than for the immense acquisition which he made to his territories with very little comparative bloodshed. He was opposed to the most illustrious warrior of his time, Hyder Ali, for whom he proved to be more than a match in the cabinet, and but little inferior to him in the field. On the death of the sovereign of Mysore, though succeeded by his brave but fanatic son Tippoo, whose furious animosity to the Company's government lost him both his dominions and his life, Mahadajee was, when his talents both as a statesman and a commander are considered, unquestionably the most formidable enemy whom the British Government had to encounter. By him the whole of the Mahratta confederacy was directed and kept together. He exercised such a wary but politic control over the discordant elements of which it was composed, that he established its power upon a firmer basis than that by

* Few actions in the histories of ancient or modern warfare have been attended with such prodigious carnage as the battle of Paniput. Upwards of a hundred thousand of the Mahratta army perished on the field of battle, while the wounded and prisoners amounted to as many more.

which it had hitherto been supported; and it enabled him to extend his own possessions by gradual encroachments upon those of his neighbours, who either wanted the courage or the means to resist his aggressions.

Three years after the memorable battle of Paniput, where the predominance of his military genius was fully established, the Mahrattas, having collected together a considerable army, descended the ghauts into the plains, under the command of Visagee Krishna, to whom Mahadajee professed a doubtful obedience. It was evident that he was not sincere in this profession, since he had already openly manifested his determination to establish himself as an independent sovereign. He had succeeded to all the important conquests which had been assigned to his father for the necessary maintenance of troops, by which means he was enabled to levy contributions upon the most wealthy Rajahs of Hindostan and to add whole districts from the dominions of those who were too weak to resist his rapidly increasing power. All these acts of unjustifiable rapine were committed in the name of the Paishwa, and though that prince had but a nominal participation in the plunder, his commands were made the pretext for exactions and conquests, from which even his own territories were not exempt. The military achievements of Mahadajee, though signal, were, perhaps, less remarkable than the results which he exhibited of a well-directed policy, standing among the native powers of India as an oracle of political wisdom, while he had signalized himself not less as a brave and consummate general.

On the death of Narraen Rao, Mahadajee became a member of the Mahratta regency, and had the principal command against the British army in 1779, when it was compelled to assent to the convention at Wurgaum. A separate negotiation was on this occasion opened with him. To him Ragoonath Rao surrendered himself, and the English hostages, who had been conveyed to the Mahratta camp, were committed to his care. In fact, he appears to have been looked upon both by the native powers and by the British Government as the great directing wheel in that political machine which had raised the Mahratta state to such a commanding elevation among the numerous principalities of the east. In consequence of his general humanity as a man—with some reservation, for he had his indomitable moments of sanguinary revenge—his power as a prince, his sagacity as a politician, his personal bravery and consummate skill as a commander, he was universally feared and respected. He brought his army from a mere tumultuary force into such a state of discipline as rendered it capable of disputing the field with British troops almost upon terms of equality, while none of the forces of native princes were able to stand before him. Whenever he gained an accession of territory—and this he was constantly doing during the whole progress of his military career—he contrived to keep it as much by the wisdom of his government, as by the terror which the success of his arms naturally inspired. The Company had possessed themselves of a portion of his conquests, but this was restored by treaty in 1781; and perhaps no Indian prince has maintained, during

a tolerably long life of sovereign dominion, the possession of so great an extent of territory with so little disturbance, if we consider that his whole political life was one of aggression and feudal warfare. Even while he was intrusted with the important command of the Paishwa's body-guard, which consisted of the choicest of his cavalry, he had a considerable army in his own pay; and upon the death of Mulhar Rao, the founder of the Holcar family, so distinguished in Mahratta warfare, he became the most powerful among the Mahratta chieftains.

Notwithstanding the general success of his arms, Scindia received some occasional checks, as at the battle of Lalsont, in which he was so completely defeated by the combined forces of Marwar and Jeipoor, that a large portion of the territory which he had previously secured was for the moment snatched from his grasp, and it was some time before he recovered from the effects of that signal discomfiture. It is, however, surprising to observe how quickly the Mahratta power appeared to derive new energy from defeat. Though at the battle of Paniput, in which Mahadajee first gave those tokens of military capacity which distinguished him through life, and where upwards of a hundred thousand men are said to have been left dead on the field of battle, the Mahratta supremacy seemed for ever annihilated; yet we shortly after see their armies pouring like a deluge over the fertile plains of Hindostan, establishing new principalities, and again rearing the shrine of idolatry where the crescent had once proudly waved in scorn of the impure rites of Hindoo devotion, or where the stately

mosque had supplanted the still more stately pagoda. No one was so instrumental in effecting this change in the political aspect of Hindostan as Mahadajee Scindia, whose name will ever stand conspicuously prominent in the annals of modern India.

Perhaps the most extraordinary proof of Scindia's high character among the reigning powers of India, not only as a warrior but also as a statesman and pacificator, will be found in the success of his endeavours to conclude a peace with Hyder Ali and the confederate Mahratta chiefs, then at war with the Company's government. The Mahrattas were the only native power from whom the enterprising Prince of Mysore had received any thing like a formidable check, and his hostility was naturally in proportion to the impediments which they had thrown in his way to conquest; nevertheless, the influence of Mahadajee was felt and admitted by this rude, unpolished warrior.

In that memorable treaty by which Scindia was recognised by the British Government as an independent prince, the extraordinary weight of his influence was strikingly evidenced. He became the mutual guarantee between the British Government and the Mahratta confederacy, and in case either party violated the contract, he engaged to join the aggrieved against the aggressors until its conditions should be fulfilled.

About the year 1782 the Maharaja* introduced into his army that system of European discipline which rendered it so formidable to the native powers. He had in his service a number of French officers,

* Scindia was so called; the name signifies the great Raja.

among whom was the well known General Comte de Boigne, who, with that activity and restless energy for which they are so remarkable, and excited moreover by their feelings of national rivalry towards that government which had crushed their power in the East, exerted every effort of their military skill to raise the army of the Mahratta chieftain to an equality with that of his European rivals. As, however, he was now at peace with the Company's government, which alone could arrest his progress in any military enterprise, he made himself master of Delhi and Agra, obtaining possession of the person of the feeble representative of the Mogul dynasty, by whom he was appointed nominal vicegerent, but actual sovereign, of the empire. Thus, in the course of a few years, he became a professed slave but the severe master of the unfortunate Emperor Shah Allum; the pretended friend but covert rival of the house of Holcar; the acknowledged retainer but actual plunderer of the family of the Paishwa. Though Mahadajee was in the main a humane and even a benevolent man for one of his quick and fiery race, his career was not unmarked by violence. His ambition was unbounded, and this frequently betrayed him into acts of arbitrary oppression. The almost entire dissolution of the Mogul empire, and the disunion among the Mahratta confederacy, enabled him so to extend his territorial acquisitions, that before his death, which happened in 1794, he had acquired by the mere ascendancy of his military genius, a greater extent of dominion than any prince since the death of Aurungzebe.

Among the peculiarities of this extraordinary man,

he is represented to have been rigidly tenacious of form in his public intercourse with his superiors or equals, as the following passage from Sir John Malcolm's "Memoirs of Central India" will show. "Although, by the treaty of Salbye, Sindia was recognised, as far as related to the British Government, an independent prince, he continued to observe, on all other points which referred to his connexion with the Poonah government, the most scrupulous attention to forms. When he became master of Shah Allum and his capital, he made the degraded emperor sign a commission, appointing the Paishwa vicegerent of the empire, and received from the head of the Mahratta state one as his deputy in that high office; but when he came to Poonah, during the rule of the second Madhoo Row, a scene was exhibited, which stands, perhaps, alone amid all the mummery to which the mock humility of artful and ambitious leaders has resorted to deceive the world. The actual sovereign of Hindostan from the Sutleje to Agra; the conqueror of the provinces of Rajpootana; the commander of an army composed of sixteen battalions of regular infantry, five hundred pieces of cannon, and one hundred thousand horse; the possessor of two-thirds of Malwa, and some of the finest provinces of the Deccan,—when he went to pay his respects to a youth who then held the office of Paishwa, he dismounted from his elephant at the gates of Poonah, placed himself in the great hall of audience below all the hereditary nobles of the state, and when the Paishwa came into the room and desired him to be seated with others, he objected, on the ground of being unworthy of the honour; and, untying a bundle

which he carried under his arm, produced a pair of slippers, which he placed before Madhoo Row, saying, 'This is my occupation, it was that of my father.' Mahadajee, at the moment he said this, took the old slippers the Paishwa had in use, which he wrapped up carefully, and continued to hold them under his arm; after which, though with apparent reluctance, he allowed himself to be prevailed upon to sit down."

I confess this story appears to me to challenge a doubt; it seems rather apocryphal that an eastern prince, with whom magnificence is as germane as the love of admiration in a coquette, should, in a full audience of his nobles, have thrust his feet into an old pair of slippers. He no doubt appeared in state upon such a state occasion, and therefore how the humble Mahadajee could have obtained possession of his highness's old slippers, demands a wiser head than mine to determine. In truth, I am altogether disposed to doubt the authenticity of this anecdote, though it bears the sanction of so respectable a name in oriental literature as that of Sir John Malcolm, for whom I, in common with thousands, entertain the respect which is due to one who has written so copiously and so well upon the modern history of India.

The old warrior was only less fond of state because he was more fond of money, and it is certain that, with all his show of humility, if the anecdote recorded of him by Sir John Malcolm be true, he could at times assume the haughtiness of the conqueror, and make the vanquished feel that he was one. He was very penurious, and succeeded in amassing great treasure,

so that at his death his successor found himself not only in possession of a vast extent of territory, but also of a well-filled treasury. The mystery which hung over the origin of his family he never appears to have been at any pains to remove; but that he considered himself to be of Rajpoot descent seems to me to be more than probable from a circumstance mentioned by Colonel Tod, in a note at page 117, vol. i. of his Annals and Antiquities of Rajast'han. "On the death of Mahadajee Scindia," says that writer in the note alluded to, "the females of his family, in apprehension of his successor, sought refuge and protection with the Rajah of Duttea. An army was sent to demand their surrender, and hostility was proclaimed as the consequence of refusal. This brave man would not even wait the attack, but at the head of a devoted band of three hundred horse, with their lances, carried destruction among their assailants, neither giving nor receiving quarter, and thus he fell in defence of the laws of sanctuary and honour. Even when grievously wounded, he would accept no aid, and refused to leave the field, but disdaining all compromise, awaited his fate. The author has paused upon the spot where this gallant deed was performed, and from his son, the present Rajah, had the annals of his house."

The circumstance of the "females of Scindia's family" placing themselves at his death under a Rajpoot chieftain, would fairly lead to the inference that they were of that tribe; and the rigid strictness which the Rajpoots invariably exercised to prevent their women from forming alliances with any other

race seems fairly to warrant the conclusion that they ranked Mahadajee Scindia as one of their own.

Mahadajee, though not a man given to excesses, was so fond of the areeka or beetel-nut, that he kept a person constantly near him to supply him with that luxury. This man's sole employment was to put the nut into the mouth of the venerable chieftain whenever he required a fresh supply, as, with all his energies, both mental and physical, when they were called for, he could not entirely divest himself of the natural temperament of a Hindoo. He also kept a Bramin who attended him daily to put the marks of his caste upon his nose and forehead. Those marks are made with a pigment of yellow ochre and oil, which is washed off and renewed every morning. The followers of Siva and Vishnoo have the linear marks differently placed, the one horizontal, the other vertical. The usual note of caste is one circular or cylindrical spot between two lines.

I shall conclude this sketch with, upon the whole, a very just summary of his character from Grant Duff's "History of the Mahrattas." "He was a man," says Mr. Duff, "of great political sagacity and considerable genius; of deep artifice, of restless ambition, and of implacable revenge. With a high opinion of his own personal address, he generally failed where he attempted to exercise it, and in ebullitions of anger, to which he was prone, he frequently exposed what he most wished to conceal. His countenance was expressive of good sense and good humour; but his complexion was dark, his person inclining to corpulency, and he limped from the effects of his wound



at Paniput. His habits were simple, his manners kind and frank, but sometimes blustering and coarse. He was beloved by his dependants, liberal to his troops in assignments of land or in orders upon villages, but quite the reverse in payments from his treasury or in personal donatives; a characteristic, not only of Mahadajee Scindia, but of the Mahrattas generally. His disposition was not cruel, although his punishments were severe. He could not only write, but, what is rare among the Mahrattas, he was a good accountant, and understood revenue affairs. His districts in Malwa were well managed—a circumstance, however, which must be ascribed to a judicious selection of agents; for Scindia, like most Mahratta chieftains, was too much engaged in politics or war to bestow the time and attention necessary to a good civil government. He died without male issue." He was succeeded by his grand-nephew and adopted son, Dowlut Rao, then only thirteen years old, and this latter was the person with whom the present Duke of Wellington contested the memorable field of Assaye.

CHAPTER XVII.

DELHI.—CUTTUB MINAR.—HURDWAR.

From Agra we proceeded to Delhi, the once magnificent capital of the Mogul empire, and even now splendid in its degradation and decay. On the road at Futtypore Sicri is a lofty minaret curiously ornamented, from the summit of which the Emperor Akbar used to enjoy elephant fights and other similar sports, of which he was excessively fond. We halted at Matura, an ancient city on the banks of the Jumna, about thirty miles from Agra. Near the Eastern gate is a remarkable gravestone, nine yards long; it covers the body of a Mussulman, stated to have been buried upwards of eight hundred years, and whose corpse when inhumed is still believed to have been precisely the same length as the stone. In the neighbourhood of this city there is a number of monkeys of a very large size; these animals are supported from a fund left for that purpose by Mahadajee Scindia. One of them was lame from some accident, and, in consequence of this resemblance to his patron, was treated with especial respect. Upon one occasion, two European officers shot at these monkeys, and were immediately attacked so furiously by the fanatic inhabitants that, in attempting to escape by crossing the river upon an elephant, they were both drowned.

Seven days after quitting Agra, we entered Delhi. The ruins in the neighbourhood of this once mighty city are extraordinary; they are scattered over a surface of nearly twenty square miles, and the old city is said to have occupied an area of equal extent. Its original name before the Mahomedan invasion was Indraprasth, by which name it is still distinguished in the historical records of the Hindoos. The modern Delhi was founded by the Emperor Shah Jehan, in 1631, and named after himself, Shahjehanabad. It is about seven miles in circumference, and is protected on three sides by a plain brick wall. Within the new city are the remains of several splendid palaces, and there are many noble edifices still standing in the glory of their strength and beauty, among which may be mentioned the Jumma Musjid, a grand mosque, built by Shah Jehan at a cost of a hundred and twenty thousand pounds; a great sum in the seventeenth century, especially in that country.

Though, in consequence of the almost total extinction of the Mogul empire, the present population of Delhi bears no proportion to that which thronged within its walls during the reign of its founder and his ambitious successor, it has nevertheless greatly increased since it fell under the protection of the British government. This has, in some degree, restored it to its former flourishing condition, since there is not perhaps a city of Hindostan, which can even now vie with it in the wealth of its bazars, and in all the various indications of a prosperous and happy population.

The streets of Delhi, like those of all Indian cities, are in general very narrow; indeed, I believe there

are only two exceptions, and those are of a great width, so much so that one of them had formerly a spacious aqueduct running along its whole extent. The modern city is built upon two rocky eminences, and occupies a considerable space; it is divided into thirty-six compartments. The imperial palace is protected on three sides by a lofty wall, the fourth being open to the river.

The most remarkable thing in this neighbourhood, abounding in magnificent ruins, is the well known Cuttub Minar* at old Delhi, nine miles south of the modern city. It is a magnificent tower, two hundred and forty-two feet high, and one hundred and forty-three feet in circumference at the base. The purpose for which it was erected is lost in the obscurity of ages, so that even conjecture is now almost silent upon the question. The great architectural beauty of this building, its amazing height and prodigious strength, the costliness of the materials used in its construction, and the richness and diversity of its decorations, render it at this moment one of the most extraordinary edifices in a country remarkable for the number and beauty of its structures:—it is altogether perhaps the finest tower in existence. On the lower part of the column are quotations from the Koran. Where these quotations now appear, there are said to have been originally figures in bas-relief, illustrative of Hindoo mythology, which were transformed into Arabic characters by the ingenuity of Mussulman devotees. The tower, therefore, is supposed to have been a Hindoo work, embellished by the worshippers

* See title-page.

of Mahomet, and claimed as their own. It has, indeed, been the puzzle of all modern speculators, whether it really be a Hindoo or a Mahomedan building, but, notwithstanding the extracts from the Koran with which it is embellished, I believe the prevailing opinion to be that it is a Hindoo structure. Some writers, however, have conjecturd that this tower was intended to form one of the minarets of a splendid mosque, designed to have been built by a Mahomedan emperor who sat on the throne of Delhi in the thirteenth century, and from whom the Minar now standing derives its name. The tomb of Cuttub Shah, who is supposed by them to have built the Cuttub Minar, may be seen within a few hundred yards of it. Had he lived to complete a building to correspond with this tower, it would indeed have been a most marvellous structure. But this surmise seems to me to be contradicted by the remains of the larger tower, which could not have been intended as another corresponding minaret of the same edifice. Its vast size clearly points it out as designed to stand alone, a prodigious monument, which it would have been, at once of human labour and of human enterprise. Even the smaller pillar is perhaps at this moment the largest in the world. This building is circular, its base being a polygon of twenty-seven sides. The surface is fluted, having twenty-seven divisions partly semicircular and partly angular, and the flutings in each story are different. The structure is divided into four stories, at unequal distances, ornamented by four beautiful balconies. The whole is surmounted by a large cupola of red granite. Bishop Heber says of it,

" The Cuttub Minar is really the finest tower I have ever seen, and must, when its spire was complete, have been still more beautiful. The remaining great arches of the principal mosque, with their granite pillars, covered with inscriptions in the florid Cufic character, are as fine in their way as any of the details of York Minster. In the front of the principal of these arches is a metal pillar, like that in Firoze Shah's castle, near the walls of Delhi, and several other remains of a wall and temple, more ancient than the foundation of Cuttub, and which I should have thought striking, if they had not been in such a neighbourhood." On the right of the metal pillar spoken of by Bishop Heber, as you face it from the tower, and only a short distance from it, is the large columnar fragment of which I have already spoken. It is stated to have been left in its present unfinished state by the projectors; but why has baffled conjecture. It is at the base nearly twice the circumference of the perfect tower, and has a winding passage, but without stairs, in the centre. It is not more than forty feet high, but, had it been completed, it would have been one of the greatest artificial wonders in the universe, next to the large pyramid in the vicinity of Grand Cairo. The exterior of the Cuttub Minar is fluted as high as the last story, the upper division being quite plain and composed entirely of marble. Though exposed to the storms of centuries, the shaft has suffered no perceptible injury; the minutest ornaments, and these are numerous and various, appear still as perfect as ever. In the centre of the Minar, there is a spiral staircase, which takes you to its summit, whence you behold one

of the finest prospects ever seen by mortal eye. The stairs are in many places so broken, that the ascent is painful, but this difficulty once mastered, it more than recompenses the toil which has been undergone.

This tower is visited as an object of curiosity by every traveller who comes to Delhi, and surrounded as it is by perhaps the most extensive, if not the most magnificent, ruins in the universe, it becomes an object of peculiar interest, independently of its own specific attraction. It stands almost perfect in its symmetry and splendour, amid the wrecks of former generations, pointing with stately solemnity to the ravages of war and the devastations of time, and mutely conveying to the heart a striking lesson of the mutability of human grandeur. It sadly realizes the painful reflection, that the noblest works of man's ingenuity must finally pass to "that land where all things are forgotten," and be mingled in undistinguishable oblivion with "the things beyond the flood."

Whilst we were in the neighbourhood of the Cuttub Minar, my companions and I saw a most extraordinary creature, of which I am afraid it will be almost impossible to convey an adequate idea by description. Walking leisurely towards our palankeens, which were waiting for us at some distance from the tower, our attention was painfully arrested by an object that seemed to be something superhuman, though its appearance betokened the very antithesis of an angel. It, however, claimed to be a man. There was a number of cows straggling about the land, after which he sprang with amazing activity, and, having collected them in a compact group, he began with the

most singular exertions of voice and gesture to drive them forward. They seemed perfectly to understand both his signals and appeals, regularly advancing as he directed them. We were startled at his approach. This cowherd, for such he really was, being employed by the ryots or farmers of the country to take care of their cattle, was the most consummate piece of human deformity that nature in the wildest extravagance of her caprice ever sent into the world:—he was positively hideous. He had something, though very little, the appearance of a human being, yet apparently belonged to the quadrumanus order of animals, for he went on all fours, though he occasionally erected his unearthly-looking body, and stood before us in all the hideousness of the most monstrous abortion. We walked up to some huts at a short distance amid the ruins with which the neighbourhood abounds, and upon inquiring about this unsightly shape—

"If shape it might be called, which shape had none,"

it actually approached and squatted itself within a yard of my heels. It was a human monster, born of human parents, and reared by them, as we were informed, with the greatest care and tenderness. It was about five-and-twenty years old, strong, healthy, and very tractable, but speechless; and this evidently from organic imperfection, as its sense of hearing was not in the least impaired. The head was tolerably perfect, though the features were extremely repulsive; but the cerebrum was so much depressed that the head seemed almost to terminate with the eyebrows. The body was out of all proportion, being

too long for its accessories. The articulations of the arms were altogether monstrous, the elbows being inverted so as to enable the creature to use his arms as forelegs, whilst the limb, from the inosculation of the elbow to the extremity of the fingers, did not exceed half a dozen inches. The fingers were so short as to resemble toes, and the hands had no thumbs. The joint of the knee was reversed like that of the elbow, and the member below it contracted into the length of little more than a span, so that the motion was altogether bestial. The neck, moreover, appeared to be several inches too long, which enabled the miserable creature to move his head erect. Although so uncouth in his proportions, he was astonishingly active, and, as we were told, capable of enduring considerable fatigue. He had no power of utterance beyond that of a frightfull yell, to which he invariably had recourse whenever his dumb charge did not heed his motions with the alacrity he desired. He, however, never exhibited any violence towards them, but on the contrary always appeared anxious that they should receive kind treatment. He was perfectly harmless, and remarkably abstemious, living solely upon rice, which he always ate with great moderation. Although at the time we saw him he was only five-and-twenty years old, he looked full double that age; still his eyes were bright and penetrating.

There were various surmises among the rude cultivators of the soil who dwelt in the neighbourhood respecting this piece of deformed humanity; many considering him an incarnation of some evil spirit, doomed to expiate the sins of a former life in a body

loathsome to the sight of man, only to be rewarded with a more transcendant form when the period of expiation should terminate. Others went so far as to look upon him as an Avatar of Vishnoo, surmising that he had descended from the world of glory in such a homely vesture of mortal flesh to teach humility to mankind. The prevailing opinion certainly seemed to be that his distorted frame was the abode of a soul which had formerly inhabited another body, and was undergoing a state of purgation preparatory to its entrance into the blissful abodes of paradise; so that he was universally treated with kindness, as much from sympathy and superstitious reverence, nay probably more so, than from any disinterested feeling of compassion for his miserable state. The doctrine of the metempsychosis, or transmigration of souls, is very sublimely supported in the Bhagvat Geeta, from which I give an extract. "The soul is not a thing of which a man may say, it hath been, it is about to be, or is to be hereafter; for it is a thing without birth; it is ancient, constant, and eternal, and is not to be destroyed in this its mortal frame. How can a man who believeth that this thing is incorruptible, eternal, inexhaustible, and without birth, think that he can either kill or cause it to be killed! As a man throweth away old garments and putteth on new, even so the soul, having quitted its old mortal frames, entereth into others which are new. The weapon divideth it not, the fire burneth it not, the water corrupteth it not, the wind drieth it not away; —for it is indivisible, inconsumable, incorruptible, and is not to be dried away;—it is eternal, universal,

permanent, immoveable; it is invisible, inconceivable, and unalterable." Some of the notions of the Hindoo philosophers show that they were scarcely behind the ancient Greeks in those sublime conceptions, which arose out of the mere superior energies of the human mind, uninfluenced by the divine light of revelation. And even amidst their most marvellous histories a vein of true philosophy may be discovered under the crust of all that is besotted and barbarous, and the ore has only to be separated from the dross to obtain the sterling deposit of fine thoughts and sublime conceptions, both in psychology and natural ethics.

Upon quitting Delhi, we made the best of our way to Anopeshur, a military station of some importance upon the Ganges, and there we had an opportunity of witnessing one of those singular phenomena, so frequent in this land of storms and sunshine. We were quietly seated under the shadow of a large tree, taking our luncheon, while the dandies were dragging our budgerow over a long shallow, intending again to embark so soon as she should clear the shoal, when our attention was arrested by the appearance of a moving mass in the distance, which seemed to extend laterally as far as the eye could penetrate, and perpendicularly from earth to sky. Its approach was gradual, while the effect was at once perplexing and awful. The whole surface of the advancing object was at first of a dull brassy red, the colour growing more vivid as it approached, which it now appeared to do with an increasing momentum. It was still undefinable; we could neither tell what it portended nor what it was. It continued to approach, gradually

extending its dimensions, apparently filling the whole region of the atmosphere; and at length the hue which had been hitherto tolerably uniform, began to change, and the whole mass dimly scintillated in different parts, like a subdued light through coloured figured gauze, indistinctly radiating through the interstices of the pattern. The air was calm, but, as the marvel drew near, the boughs of the trees around us began to be violently agitated, and in a few moments the wind blew in one continued gust, which was shortly followed by a tremendous squall, tearing large branches from the trees, and scattering the leaves around us in every direction. The mystery was now solved. The moving mass which had so strangely perplexed us, proved to be a vast body of floating sand, that had been raised by the wind until it nearly filled the air, and was carried before it almost with the impetus of a torrent. The air was so thickened with it, that, for at least a half minute while it was passing over us, we could scarcely either breathe or see. The sun shining in full splendour behind it, darted against the moving obstacle his glowing rays, which were only partially obstructed by the shifting particles as they were driven onward by the wind. The sunbeams were broken into numberless fantastic coruscations, as the glittering crystals with which the air was charged reflected them in their rapid and tumultuous course; thus producing those shifting tints which had at first so much perplexed us. By the time the sand-storm reached us, the wind had become so violent that we could scarcely stand against it; and, when it had passed over us, which it very speedily did, we found

that it had left no inconsiderable tokens of its ravages, as several huts were unroofed, over which the storm had swept in its destructive fury.

These sudden tempests frequently occur, and at all seasons, occasionally making terrible devastation. It is, however, fortunate that the dwellings of the poor in India are constructed of materials so readily attainable and so cheap that the damage done upon these occasions is soon repaired, and with little cost; but the crops suffer greatly at times from these visitations; though it generally happens that, as the crops are produced during the tempestuous season when the rain is almost constantly falling and storms are frequent, means are taken to protect them against such casualties as I have described, and, the common grain of the country being a hardy plant, upon the whole no serious mischief is done by the violence even of the monsoons. The ryots have little more to do than to sprinkle their seed upon the surface of the soil, which is covered by a very easy process, when it grows with great rapidity and repays the trifling labours of the husbandman with an abundant return.

Whirlwinds are not only very common in India, but often terribly violent, and I may state here what happened to myself whilst I was in the Deccan, near Poonah. I was confined to my bed in a bungalow that had been just built. It was covered with a strong thatch fixed to thick bamboo beams, which had successfully resisted the violence of a recent monsoon. The day was mild and beautiful, the sun flooding every object with its glories, whilst there was a gentle breeze which tempered the fer-

vency of its rays. The door of the bungalow was open, to admit the breeze that undulated through the apartment in which I was lying with grateful and refreshing coolness. In a moment, without the slightest warning, a column of air rolled through the door with a hiss and turbulence that startled me. I could distinguish the eddying whirlwind. In a few seconds it escaped through the venetian opposite to the window, which it tore from the frame in an instant. As the same time the roof was carried away so clearly, that there was not a single beam left, and borne to a distance of at least three hundred yards. I should think the whole mischief was done in less than six seconds. My bed, which stood at the extremity of the room, was not touched ;—even the curtains were not ruffled, nor did I feel the wind, though so near me, which left behind such terrible proofs of its potency.

We now crossed the river, and proceeded through Rohilcund to Hurdwar, whence we resolved, after staying as long as might be agreeable or convenient, to return to Calcutta. We arrived at Hurdwar, the most sacred town on the banks of the Ganges, just eighteen days after we had quitted Delhi.

Hurdwar, or Haridwar, the latter being the proper orthography, signifies the gate of Hari—that is, the gate of God; the word Hari being alike applied to each of the three persons in the Hindoo triad. Hurdwar is one of the most celebrated places of pilgrimage in Hindostan, and, though a small mean town, is principally remarkable for an annual mart, to which an immense number of people resort from all the neighbouring countries, so that at the particular period

when this mart is held, several hundred thousand persons take up their temporary abode in the town and its vicinity.

Not far from hence, the Ganges breaks through the Sewaluk mountains and enters the plains of India. "This mighty stream," says Colonel Tod, "rolling its masses of water from the glaciers of the Himalaya, and joined by many auxiliary streams, frequently carries destruction before it. In one night a column of thirty feet in perpendicular height has been known to bear away all within its sweep, and to such an occurrence the capital of Hasti* is said to have owed its ruin."

The town of Hurdwar is nothing but one continued bazar, consisting only of a single long street filled with shops from one end to the other, among which sweetmeats and condiments of all kinds are exhibited for sale in extraordinary profusion; so that flies swarm and buzz around in such countless multitudes as to be an intolerable nuisance. The principal articles exposed for sale during the annual fair are horses, camels, dried fruits, nuts, sweetmeats, tobacco, and Cashmere shawls.

"There are horses," says Captain Skinner, "from all parts of the globe, elephants, camels, buffaloes, cows, and sheep, of every denomination, thickly crowded together; dogs, cats, monkeys, leopards, bears, and chetas; sometimes the cubs of a tigress; and always from the elk to the moose-deer, every species of that animal; shawls from Cashmere and woollen cloths from

* A city formerly standing on the banks of the Ganges, about forty miles south of Hurdwar.

England are displayed upon the same stall; coral from the Red Sea, agate from Guzzerat, precious stones from Ceylon, gums and spices from Arabia, assa-fœtida and rose-water from Persia, brought by the natives of each country to the general mart, lie by the side of watches from France, pickles from China, sauces from England, and perfumes from Bond Street and the Rue St. Honoré. I have seen a case of French rouge, and henna for the fingers of an eastern fair, selling in adjoining booths; antimony to give languor to an oriental eye, and all the embellishments of an European toilette.

"The dealers invariably ask ten times as much as they mean to take, and vary their demands as they gather from your countenance your anxiety or indifference for the purchase. It is not uncommon for a horse-dealer to fall, in the course of a few moments, in his demand, from ten to one thousand rupees. When the bargain is about to be concluded, the buyer and the seller throw a cloth over their hands, and, naming a price, ascertain by the pressure of certain joints how nearly they are making towards its termination. By this means, in the midst of a crowd, they deal in secret; and it is laughable to see, through an affected air of carelessness, how deeply they are interested."

Bramins swarm at these annual meetings at Hurdwar, and the sums they collect from the bathers is perfectly incredible. They exact a fee from every devout adult who enters the sacred river upon these solemn occasions, and according to the amount of the fee will be the extent of the purchased remission.



for, if the offering be small, punishment is threatened instead of remission promised; so that often the poorest wretches give to the covetous priests all they possess in the world, in order to propitiate their influence with the Deity. On some occasions the Bramins have been said to collect in this way upwards of twenty thousand pounds at one meeting. The influence exercised by them over the superstitious Hindoos is that which is inspired by terror, and so complete is their ascendancy that their dupes stand in greater awe of them than of the Divinity himself, and fear them far worse than they do the evil powers who preside over their thrice seven Hells.

The principal gaut, or flight of steps from the street to the river, exhibits a most elegant piece of plain masonry, and is considered upon the whole the most sacred spot upon the Ganges. At the annual fair these steps are so crowded, that serious accidents sometimes occur; and in the year 1820, many hundred lives were lost owing to the pressure of the eager multitude upon the principal gaut. The single street of which Hurdwar almost entirely consists, is parallel with the course of the Ganges, and very narrow, especially where it terminates upon the large gaut. Here the bank is high, and the number of steps to the water's edge considerable; the descent is wide, gradual, and easy. During the annual pilgrimage, these steps are immensely thronged at particular times of the day, and sometimes, during these seasons of concourse, half a million of persons have been known to bathe at this consecrated place in the course of a few hours. The waters of the river are at this

season at their lowest, being afterwards swollen by the torrents poured from the mountains during the prevalence of the monsoons. In consequence of their reputation for sanctity, persons of either sex bathe in them indiscriminately without the slightest feeling of indelicacy or indecorum, their depth at this particular spot not being above four feet. Children, too, of all ages beyond mere babyhood, may be seen paddling in the consecrated stream, though they seldom venture beyond a few feet from the bank.

It is amusing to mark the difference between the general bathers, who make enjoyment the handmaid of devotion, and those more rigid devotees who are fastidiously strict in fulfilling every observance of their voluminous ritual; the former seem to enjoy the luxury of the bath, evidently showing that their performance of a religious duty is a bodily gratification. They immerse themselves joyously under the gently rippling water, the women carefully cleaning their long raven hair, and the men their small but compact and muscular bodies. The richer pilgrim walks gravely into the stream, led on either side by a venerable Bramin; as soon as he reaches the middle of the current, the two holy guides plunge him thrice into the sacred element, and then silently conduct him back to the shore. Their gravity and the profound silence which they maintain often produce a solemn effect upon the native spectators, who look upon these sanctified hypocrites, their priests, as inspired. This scene is altogether singular, and is very amusing to a stranger, whose excitement to laughter is frequently provoked by the bearing of the crowd which throngs

the river to an extent of several hundred yards. Accidents from alligators seldom or never occur so high up the Ganges, as those animals chiefly confine themselves to the lower parts of the stream, where they find a greater abundance of prey.

The accident which occurred at Hurdwar in the year 1820 arose from the following circumstance. From the end of the long street which opens upon the gaut, a narrow passage led directly down to the steps. This passage declined considerably, and was much narrower at the river end than at that which connects it with the main avenue. Upon this melancholy occasion it happened that, when the moment for bathing had arrived, for the Hindoos are always great observers of "times and seasons," a simultaneous rush was made into this narrow outlet, which was filled in a few moments. Every year an immense number of strangers arrive who have never before visited this sacred spot, all eager to perform their ablutions in the holy waters on the first great day of the general concourse; and they who had come on this occasion being unacquainted with the narrowness of the passage to the gaut, thousands of them pushed forwards from the rear without any apprehension of mischief. The force of the crowd was consequently so great, that they who had reached the narrow extremity had not sufficient time to extricate themselves from the pressure, to enable those immediately behind to take their place and maintain their position against the progress of the living torrent, which bore onward with an irresistible impetus. The entire passage was filled, and

the egress so confined, that the press continued to accumulate at one end faster than it could disengage itself at the other. At length the crush became dreadful, and this immense mass of living beings was so tightly wedged together as to be perfectly immoveable. They, however, who were in the main street, not aware of the situation of those who were jammed together in the narrow passage, continued their exertions to advance, and thus momentarily increased the peril of their unhappy companions. In fact, the crowd was so prodigious, filling every avenue that led to the gaut, and pressing from every quarter to this one point, that the narrow passage leading to it from the town was completely choked up, and every attempt at extrication rendered utterly fruitless. During this dreadful interval, hundreds were crushed to death, hundreds were maimed for life, and hundreds severely injured. The shrieks and cries of agony are represented by those present to have been appalling; but there was no possibility of escape. Still the body of eager worshippers continued their efforts to advance, ignorant of the terrible effects of those efforts to those who preceded them, and when at length the dreadful fact was promulgated through the crowd, it was some hours before the street was entirely cleared, and the whole extent of the mischief ascertained. When this was done, it was found that nearly one thousand persons had been crushed to death, among whom were several sepoys belonging to the Company's forces stationed at Hurdwar for the maintenance of good order during this usually tumultuary assemblage. A great number of women and children were among

the sufferers, and the number of maimed and otherwise injured has, I believe, never been correctly ascertained, but it must have been very great.

Since this fatal occurrence, the passage in which the principal mischief took place, has been considerably enlarged, in order to facilitate the access to the river; an additional flight of steps has been also built, so as to obviate all likelihood of a similar accident. It created a great sensation at the time among the superstitious devotees, who were unable to account for such a severe visitation; while some of the more devout among them looked upon it as an involuntary holocaust on the part of the sufferers, preordained by Siva himself, and likely to render him the more propitious towards those who had survived this wholesale destruction.

It formerly happened that, during these periodical meetings at Hurdwar, there frequently occurred very fatal contentions among the hostile tribes assembled there. A year seldom or never passed during which much blood was not shed, as some of the encounters between these semi-barbarous tribes inhabiting the neighbouring districts, who then crowded hither, were of the most sanguinary kind. The interference of the British Government has completely put a stop to this evil, and such wise regulations have been established for the maintenance of order, that these meetings now invariably terminate without riot or bloodshed.

The grand periods for the observance of religious ceremonies at Hurdwar are once every twelve years, when Jupiter is in Aquarius at the time of the sun's

entering Aries—for the Hindoos are greatly influenced in their religious observances by the movements of the heavenly bodies—at which times from one to two millions of persons have been known to assemble, and it was at the last but one of these periods that the dreadful accident occurred which has just been described.

One morning, as I was walking near the end of the town, with my head turned and gazing at some object which had struck my attention, I happened to run against an old woman, who instantly fell from the force of so sudden and unexpected a collision. I immediately raised her, and never during my existence had I beheld any thing akin to humanity so perfectly hideous. Every feature of her face was frightful. Her hair, matted and grizzled, fell upon her withered shoulders in long thin wisps, like the dull wiry grass which occasionally hangs from the crest of a sun-scorched rock. Her forehead appeared as if it had been crimped; the wrinkles were so near together that a needle's point could scarcely have been inserted between them. The skin clung so close to her cheek-bones as to develop the grim anatomy of her visage with a minuteness almost appalling. Nose she had none, but the slight indication of it which remained showed that such a member had once a local habitation upon her now revolting countenance. Her eyes were so deeply sunk in her head, and the lids approximated so closely, that the dim lurid orbs were scarcely discernible.* The moment I had raised this

* The Hindoo women are very beautiful when young, but become perfect hags in their old age.

unearthly-looking object in the guise of woman, she poured upon me a volley of curses so bitter and malignant that I shrank from her with disgust. I found afterwards that she was a reputed witch. There are several kinds of witches, as well as wizards, in this country. The most formidable are the Jiggerkhars or liver-eaters.

"One of this class can steal away the liver of another by looks and incantations. Other accounts say that by looking at a person he deprives him of his senses, and then steals from him something resembling the seed of a pomegranate, which he hides in the calf of his leg. The jiggerkhar throws on the fire the grain, which thereupon spreads to the size of a dish, and he distributes it among his fellows to be eaten; which ceremony concludes the life of the fascinated person. A jiggerkhar is able to communicate his art to another, which he does by teaching him the incantations, and making him eat a bit of the liver-cake. If any one cut open the calf of the magician's leg, extract the grain, and give it to the afflicted person to eat, he immediately recovers: those jiggerkhars are mostly women. It is said, moreover, that they can bring intelligence from a great distance in a short space of time, and if they are thrown into a river, with a stone tied to them, they nevertheless will not sink. In order to deprive any one of this wicked power, they brand his temples and every joint in his body, cram his eyes with salt, suspend him for forty days in a subterraneous cavern, and repeat over him certain incantations. In this state he is called Detchereh. Although, after having undergone this discipline, he

is not able to destroy the liver of any one, yet he retains the power of being able to discover another jiggerkhar, and is used for detecting these disturbers of mankind. They can also cure many diseases, by administering a potion, or by repeating an incantation. Many other marvellous stories are told of these people."*

During our stay in this neighbourhood, we joined a tiger hunt, which took place a few miles from the town, where the cover was thick, and game of all kinds plentiful. Indeed, the jungles in this part of the country abound with beasts of prey, so that we had little chance of being disappointed in our expectations of excellent sport. Among the native Hindoos who joined our party there were several bowmen, who possessed such dexterity in the use of their arms that they could bring down a crow flying with the greatest ease. We had not long entered the jungle, when a large tiger was started from behind a clump of bamboo. It had no means of escaping in front, as it was opposed by several of the party on elephants, which stood with evident tokens of dismay as their formidable enemy approached them. The tiger seemed confused, stopped for a moment, and uttered a loud yell, but was urged forward by shouts from behind. It now suddenly sprang towards one of the elephants, which immediately turned round as the animal neared him, exposing the least susceptible part of his body to the gripe of his active foe. The tiger, upon reaching the elephant, instantly leaped upon his haunches, into which it fixed its formidable claws,

* Ayeen Acbery.

lacerating him considerably, and causing him to snort with anguish. The elephant, thus beset, pressed his ponderous body against a tree, beside which he had luckily stationed himself, and thus squeezed the tiger so unmercifully, that it was glad to relinquish its hold, and to drop from the elephant's side. It then limped towards the cover from which it had been first started, but stopped at the root of a peepul,* panting from the effects of its late exertion, and the severe pressure of the elephant's ribs, when a shikarry,† who had taken shelter among the lower branches, discharged his matchlock at the maimed brute, the ball hitting it in the very centre of the forehead. The tiger rolled upon its back, when the man, thinking he had despatched it, began to descend from the tree, but, to his amazement, the enraged creature sprang upon him, fixed its claws in his legs, and would have dragged him to the earth, had not one of the bowmen advanced to his rescue. The latter discharged a shaft with unerring precision at the tiger's head, which entered the right eye and transfixed the brain. The animal immediately relaxed its hold, and fell dead, while the poor shikarry was taken from his perilous position a good deal torn about the legs, though not dangerously hurt. It appeared, upon examining the dead tiger, that the ball which had struck it in the head, had been turned by the thickness of the skull, having hit it obliquely, and, passing under the skin, had escaped near the left ear, so that the brute was merely stunned for the moment.

* A tree very common in the jungles of India.

† Shikarry is a native hunter.

The elephant upon which the tiger leaped was so severely wounded that it was very sulky for some days, and it was a considerable time before it could be prevailed upon, either by coaxing or urging, to venture again into the jungle. The elephant has naturally a great dread of the tiger, and in many instances will not approach within many yards even of a dead one.

Before we quitted Hurdwar, we made a short excursion to the lower regions of the Himalaya Mountains, where we found the climate delightful, and the face of the country diversified beyond description. Here was every thing at once to delight the lover of nature, and to arrest the attention of the artist. The sportsman had nothing to wish for, as game everywhere abounded, and not a day passed without our table being spread with the most grateful variety. I reserve a particular account of this part of our excursion for a future volume. After a few weeks spent among the charming valleys which adorn the bases of these stupendous mountains, we returned to Hurdwar, and thence down the Ganges to Calcutta.

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